

**The Fraud at
the Heart of
the Mortgage
Meltdown**

By Matt Taibbi

**BRUCE
SPRINGSTEEN**

Looks Back on
'Darkness on the
Edge of Town'

KANYE WEST

The Making
of a Twisted
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EMINEM

The Road Back
From Hell



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"ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS"

Still Rockin' in the Free World

After the set by Buffalo Springfield, the highlight of this year's Bridge School Benefit (see page 24) was the all-star performance of "Rockin' in the Free World," featuring Neil Young, Pearl Jam (with Eddie Vedder, left), Elvis Costello, Modest Mouse, Grizzly Bear and Jeff Bridges. "It was undeniably cool," says Grizzly Bear's Daniel Rossen. "Seeing Jeff Bridges and Isaac Brock yelling into a microphone together is ridiculous and kind of amazing."

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ON THE COVER Eminem photographed in Detroit on October 18th, 2010, by Mark Seliger.

Styling by Dawn Boonyachlito at Margaret Maldonado Agency.
Grooming by Kayleen McAdams at the Wall Group. Hoodie by Dior Homme.



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Eminem
in Detroit

Eminem Behind the Scenes

Hear audio clips of Eminem's interview, and see the handwritten lyrics from his ROLLING STONE-inspired rap.

Holiday Movie Preview

ROLLING STONE movie critic Peter Travers tells you what to see and what to skip this season. Get the scoop on *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the new *Tron*, *The Tourist* (with Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp) and the Coen brothers' remake of the classic Western *True Grit*, starring Jeff Bridges.



Tron's
Olivia
Wilde

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Up-to-the-minute music news, interviews and exclusives

GALLERY

Kanye's Highs and Lows
 His triumphs and challenges, from "Jesus Walks" and "George Bush doesn't care about black people" to Taylor Swift.

RANDOM NOTES

Rock's Hottest Photos, Updated Every Day
 A running tally of surprise appearances, Lady Gaga's new looks and more.

ROLLING STONE LIVE

Black Angels Descend
 Austin psych-rock quintet play live at the ROLLING STONE offices.



Angels
Christian Bland



Rihanna, Bieber, Perry

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 On the scene with Rihanna, Katy Perry, Justin Bieber and more at the November 21st show in Los Angeles.

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Jersey Shore breakout star Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino reads an excerpt from his new book, *Here's the Situation*.



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CURVE AMBASSADOR KIM PHOENIX

is one of a kind. She's a firm believer that enthusiasm is best served with passion and her passion can be seen in her wide range of interests. From action movies to college football to bands that rock, **Kim is not your typical girl next door.** We caught up with her as she was heading to yet another big night out to see her indie rocker friend's new music showcase.



HOW DID YOU GET SO INTERESTED IN ROCK & ROLL?

I just love the excitement of it. When you walk into a great live music venue there is so much energy in the room. One night I was at a concert and I was talking to some guys from the band about their music. One minute I was hanging out with them and the next minute they were onstage rocking out the whole place. It was amazing. I was sold from that point on.

IS THAT HOW YOU GOT STARTED GETTING BACKSTAGE?

Yeah, it was kind of random. I mean, I never wanted to be looked at as a groupie. I just became friends with the guys because we all love music. To be honest, being backstage is too hectic. I'd rather meet up at a nearby sports bar to hang out and chat about the show. They come in with all their backstage stories which are hysterical!

WHAT OTHER KINDS OF MUSIC DO YOU LISTEN TO?

I'm interested in lots of different

things. I like some country rock stuff and I can get into some hip hop here and there. I don't get too much into pop songs of the day. They all just sound the same to me. I love good lyrics and like bands that play with passion.

DO YOU LOOK TO MUSIC FOR INSPIRATION IN YOUR ACTING?

I look to music for inspiration in everything I do. I especially love to listen to music when I run. It pushes me to want to look and feel my best and go that extra mile. Don't laugh, but I've even thought about singing one day.

HOW DID YOU GET THE CURVE FRAGRANCES BRAND AMBASSADOR GIG?

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Correspondence

{ Love Letters & Advice }



Keith Looks Back

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I'D read the best of rock memoirs, I came across your excellent excerpt of Keith Richards' *Life* ["Keith by Keith," RS 1116]. The piece was an intriguing glimpse into a reckless lifestyle led by one of rock & roll's most indestructible icons, and it left me eager for more.

Christie Dehoop
Kingston, Ontario

THERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS that seem to frequent the human mind: (1) Who are we? (2) How on earth is Keith Richards still alive?

Phil Mitchell, via the Internet

YOUR EXCERPT MAKES ME realize that there's more to Keith than embalming fluid. His neurons still fire – now if he'd only cut out the nicotine.

David J. Gross, St. Augustine, FL

"THAT IS THE FACE OF ROCK & roll," I said to a friend, brandishing the Keith cover. He scoffed, saying that rock is a young man's game. Perhaps when this thirtysomething dude gets to be my age (59), he'll have realized that life is too short not to play out your passions for as long as you're able. To some, Keith may be a poster boy for decadence. To me, he's an inspiration.

Ron Jennings, Taos, NM

Obama's Record

THANKS, "ROLLING STONE" and Tim Dickinson, for the article showcasing the president's accomplishments ["The Case for Obama," RS 1116]. I was blown away by the depth of Obama's legislative achievements when considered in context. It would be a shame if this country reverts to extremist conservatism simply because the Democrats could not play hardball with the Republicans in the war of information.

Chris Jordan, Seattle

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE DICKINSON's incredibly well-written piece on Obama's true accomplishments. It was as if my exact thoughts were projected into one succinct article. In two years, Obama has done more for our country than any president in the past 40 years. This article was the best writing I have seen in ROLLING

STONE in a long time, and that's saying something.

Zach Goldberg, Little Rock, AR

THE COUNTRY IS STILL IN a recession, people are out of work, the U.S. is going to hell, and you call Obama a historic president? I think not.

Eric Elder, Park City, KY

Tim Dickinson responds: The recession actually ended in June 2009. The economy is now growing at a two per-

"To some, Keith Richards may be a poster boy for decadence. But to me, he's an inspiration."

cent clip, and we've had nine straight months of private-sector job growth. Hell is not where the country is going, it's what we're slowly emerging from.

Leon's Comeback

OH, THAT I HAVE LIVED LONG enough to see Leon Russell return to the spotlight! Many thanks for David Fricke's fine review of Russell's great new record, *The Union* [RS 1116].

Barry Duncan
Somerville, MA

THANK YOU, ELTON JOHN, for helping to bring Leon Russell back to us. I'm almost ready

to forgive you for singing at Rush Limbaugh's wedding.

Michael Berman
Los Angeles

The Doctor Is In

DR. OZZY [RS 1116] OR MATT Taibbi? Not sure who educates or entertains me more. Sign me up for two more years, please.

Doug Maughan
Twin Falls, ID

DOES ANYONE BELIEVE THAT Ozzy actually wrote that advice column?

Ryan Mifflin, via the Internet

Ozzy Osbourne replies: I'm the Prince of Darkness, not Charles fucking Dickens – so, no, I don't put pen to paper, if that's what you mean. There'd be one issue of "Rolling Stone" every other

year if they had to wait for me to meet a deadline. What happens is my editor calls me up with the questions, I give him my expert medical opinion, and he writes it down.

Kings of Rock

THE KINGS OF LEON SHOULD not complain about their new soccer-mom fans ["It's Good to Be the Kings," RS 1116]. Remember, today's soccer moms used to be the girls backstage at the Metro, Cicero's, CBGB and hundreds of other bars around the country. We remember late-night gigs, taking covers at the door and \$1.99 breakfasts at the local diner. Now I can afford to fly to Dallas for a KOL concert and have a hell of a time. Being a mom doesn't mean that I can't still appreciate kickass music.

Kathy Pierce, Bloomington, IL

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Jon Stewart's America

Why the comedian's rally in Washington matters

"WHAT EXACTLY WAS THIS?" JON Stewart asked the multitude gathered on D.C.'s National Mall in his closing speech at the Rally to Restore Sanity on October 30th. Our answer: It was inspiring. Not only because the estimated crowd of 215,000 flat-out crushed the less than 100,000 who turned out for Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor rally – though, yes,



that was nice to see. It was *why* they came. In an angry era, they proved there are still plenty of people driven not by bile but by respect and civility, people who don't want to shout each other down but instead share a laugh. "Sanity will always be and has always been in the eye of the beholder," Stewart told the crowd. "To see you here today and the kind of people you are has restored mine." Ours, too.

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Rock & Roll



GOLDEN BOY
Kanye
onstage at
Yankee
Stadium in
September

Kanye West Gets Ready to Unveil His 'Fantasy'

Rolling in his Maybach, the MC talks about his creative rebirth and follow-up LP with Jay-Z
By Austin Scaggs

THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 21ST, Kanye West woke up in his Manhattan apartment, logged on to his Twitter account and posted, "I have decided to become the best rapper of all time!" That afternoon, sitting in traffic in the West Village in the back of his silver Maybach, West elaborates: "This new music basically just beats everybody's ass. Right

now I'm maybe three, or five, spots from the top – historically speaking – with Biggie, Jay, Eminem and Wayne." He gazes through the tinted windows. "I'm not saying I'm the best, I'm just saying it's a goal of mine, and anybody who tries to knock my goals can eat shit."

With the release of his hugely anticipated fifth album, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*, just around the corner, West is all swagger – as opposed to the apologetic figure he cut in the wake of the Taylor Swift incident at the 2009 VMAs. "I feel like I'm delivering music [Cont. on 22]

Taylor Swift Tops the Charts

Her third disc, 'Speak Now,' goes platinum in just one week

By Steve Knopper

TAYLOR SWIFT – THE bestselling artist of 2009 – got even bigger in early November, when her third album, *Speak Now*, broke a million copies in its debut week, a feat that is almost unheard of in the post-Napster era. "There's a huge trust factor between her and her fans, and they showed up," says Scott Borchetta, Swift's manager, adding that she'll tour again in 2011 after selling an astonishing 625,000 concert tickets this year, according to *Pollstar*. "Her fan base is growing up with her. She hasn't left anyone behind."

Swift reacted to the news on Twitter: "I . . . Can't . . . Believe . . . This . . . You guys have absolutely lit up my world." Moving 1,047,000 copies of *Speak Now*, Swift had the second-best week ever for a female artist, after Britney Spears' *Oops! . . . I Did It Again*, according to Nielsen SoundScan. Swift got help from Target, which sold an exclusive deluxe edition of the disc and rolled out a massive campaign to promote it. She also built toward the release with blockbuster singles – including "Mine" – that topped the iTunes chart and got heavy spins from both pop and country radio. "['Mine'] was one of the only songs in years that we [Cont. on 22]

Dave Grohl Reunites With Krist Novoselic and Butch Vig

Foo Fighters' heavy new disc features Nirvana bassist and producer

TWO DECADES AFTER working together on *Nevermind*, Dave Grohl has reteamed with Nirvana producer Butch Vig and bassist Krist Novoselic to record the Foo Fighters' seventh album. "To sit in front of speakers with Butch and Krist for the first time in 20 years was more than a musical moment to me," says Grohl. "It was a real full-circle life experience, though the intention isn't to relive what happened 20 years ago. It's to come to terms with it."

The project began more than a year ago when Grohl bumped into Vig at a party in L.A. and asked if he'd be interested in producing a bonus track for a Foo's greatest-hits album. "We had so much fun doing it," Vig says of that song, "Wheels." "We realized we hadn't worked together on an album since *Nevermind* – and he goes, 'Dude, man, do you want to make the next Foo Fighters record?'"

The band set up shop in Grohl's L.A. garage, recording exclusively with analog equipment. "We took all the Pro Tools shit and put it in the closet," says Grohl. "Then we dusted off our two 24-track



IN UTERO "We're working on 12 songs that rock," says Grohl.

tape machines and put them in my small garage where I usually keep my motorcycles." Early on, Vig read an interview where Grohl said he wanted to make the heaviest Foo Fighters record ever. "He came back into the studio and said, 'This isn't heavy enough!'" Grohl says. "I'd show him something else and he'd go, 'Nope, not heavy enough.' I was like, 'Fuck!' Right now we are working on 12 songs that rock. It really sounds like a Foo Fighters record."

All it took to recruit Novoselic – who plays bass and accom-

dion on the track "I Should Have Known" – was a phone call from Grohl. "That's what friends do," says Grohl. "The guy flies his own fucking plane. If you want him in L.A., he'll be here in three hours."

The Foos have been recording since Labor Day and plan on finishing by December 1st. "I missed being in the Foo Fighters," says Grohl. "It's my fucking family, though I had a blast these last couple of years playing drums in Them Crooked Vultures. It was a fucking dream come true, but this is where I belong." **ANDY GREENE**

IN THE NEWS

New Michael Jackson record due in December

After a year of rumors about the project, Epic Records has announced a December 14th release date for Michael,



Jackson

an album of unreleased material. The first single will be "Breaking News,"

which was recorded in New Jersey in 2007 and "recently brought to completion," according to a press release. In other Jackson news, Cirque du Soleil's *Immortal World Tour*, based on Jackson's music and lyrics, opens in October 2011 in Montreal and runs through June 2012 in North America.

Another setback for U2's 'Spider-Man' show

The opening of the Broadway musical *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark* has been pushed back three weeks as the creative team scrambles to get through rehearsals and satisfy safety requirements for the performers. Directed by **Julie Taymor** and featur-



Bono

ing original songs by U2's **Bono** and the **Edge**, the musical is the most expensive Broadway

show in history, with a budget of more than \$60 million. It was scheduled to begin previews on November 14th and to open on December 21st, but it will now open on January 11th and begin previews on November 28th. Two actors were recently injured during rehearsals of the shows' flying maneuvers, leading the New York Department of Labor to open an investigation into the safety of one of the show's most complex aerial stunts.

Aretha Franklin ailing; cancels all shows

The singer has been released from Detroit's Sinai-Grace Hospital after a brief stay for undisclosed health reasons. She has canceled all of her concerts for the next six months –

including two shows at Radio City Music Hall. "I would like to thank my friends, fans and supporters for all the beautiful flowers and their many well wishes," she said in a statement.



Franklin

First Listen: 2011's Superstar Albums

The Foos lead a packed release schedule, including Gaga, U2 and Weezer



Gaga

Lady Gaga

Born This Way

Due out: Early 2011

Gaga says her second LP is "more bitter" than her first. Working again with producer RedOne, she's going in a rock direction; the new power ballad "You and I" has a Billy Joel vibe.

Coldplay Title TBD

Due out: TBD

The rockers are deep into sessions for their fifth LP, working again with Brian Eno. "He's trying to teach us new tricks," says Chris Martin.

U2 Title TBD

Due out: Before May

Of the three records U2 have in the works, it's looking like the Danger Mouse-produced rock LP will come first. "The songs are more airborne, more light-footed," Bono says. "This could be our heyday."

Red Hot Chili

Peppers Title TBD

Due out: TBD

The band's first disc with new guitarist Josh Klinghoffer is halfway done. "We've added some keyboards and percussion," said drummer Chad Smith. "But it still sounds like us."

Britney Spears

Title TBD

Due out: TBD

Expect more supercatchy dance pop, with produc-

tion from Max Martin and Dr. Luke. "I want to get harder, grimmer," said Dr. Luke.

Lil Wayne

Tha Carter IV

Due out: Early 2011

The rapper's prison stint will deeply influence his ninth LP, which he planned to start on the day he was released. "He's got different things to talk about," says Birdman, CEO of Wayne's label.

PATRICK DOYLE



Lil Wayne

A vibrant advertisement for SKYY Vodka. The background is a solid, bright yellow. In the center, a dark blue, reflective bottle of SKYY Vodka stands vertically. To the right of the bottle, a pair of bright red, glossy high-heeled boots is positioned. One boot is standing upright, while the other is bent at the knee, with the leg extending diagonally across the lower half of the frame. The boots have thin, black stiletto heels. The SKYY logo is prominently displayed on the bottle in white, with 'VODKA' written below it in a thinner, white font. Below the product name, the text '40% ALCOHOL BY VOLUME, (80 PROOF)' is printed in a small, white, sans-serif font.

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KANYE WEST

[Cont. from 19] that people will love now and appreciate in 20 years," he says, adding that he's already broken ground on the follow-up, *Watch the Throne*, a joint record with Jay-Z. "It's going to be way more awesome than *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy*. My growth in music production and mixing is retarded."

West credits the hip-hop legends he recruited for *Twisted*

("Power" and "Monster") or for freethrough his website ("Devil in a New Dress," "So Appalled"), retailers predict a smash, with at least 500,000 first-week sales. "Eminem's *Recovery* was on the Internet for two weeks before its release, and it did well," says Christina Amedore-Smith, urban music buyer for Trans World Entertainment. "Fans want the whole package."

The MC has been previewing his new record, out November 22nd, everywhere he can: de-

make people happy, I can push art forward, and I can crash worlds together. That's what keeps me alive."

Runaway was shot over four days in Prague with a team that included artists Vanessa Bee-croft and Virgil Abloh, West's right-hand man. West also collaborated with the painter George Condo, whose work is in MoMA's collection, to create the album artwork. "I'm basically like the [pop artist] Jeff Koons of music," West says. "I'm the head of a team of creators, and I've picked creative thinkers that use their awesomeness to propel my awesomeness."

The film stars West and model Selita Ebanks, who portrays a phoenix-like creature. The rising-from-ashes metaphor clearly applies to West's career resurgence (though the rapper says the idea predates the Swift incident). He's drawn to mythology, which inspired his oversize gold chain he had made depicting the Egyptian god Horus. "I'm into graphics, just like a little kid," he says. "I believe in myself like a five-year-old believes in himself. They say, 'Look at me, look at me.' Then they do a flip in the backyard. It won't even be that amazing, but everybody will be clapping for them."

But it's a real-world character he's been comparing himself to most lately: Miles Davis. "Everything I hear about him sounds so awesome – at no point was he ever letting society or people's opinions beat him down," he says. "I like to bring up the fact that I can't sing, dance or play an instrument, but somehow I made it to the mountaintop of music." **E**



MR. FANTASY West and supermodel Selita Ebanks in *Runaway*, the arty 35-minute movie the rapper conceived and directed

Fantasy – including RZA, Pete Rock and Q-Tip – with helping him rediscover his mojo in the studio after he retreated to Japan and Italy in the wake of the Swift affair. "RZA is just a god, man," he says. "If there's anybody I look up to in the game, it's RZA." (Other guests on the record, which was cut mostly in Hawaii earlier this year, include Elton John, Bon Iver's Justin Vernon, Nicki Minaj and Rick Ross.)

Despite the fact that West has released half of the album's 12 tracks as singles on iTunes

livin'g stunning performances backed by his drum machine and a troupe of ballerinas at the VMAs and on *SNL*; hosting premieres worldwide of *Runaway*, the ambitious 35-minute film he conceived and directed around the new album. At a screening in Paris, he broke into tears, and in Los Angeles, he spoke openly about having suicidal thoughts. "I'm basically the most honest person that you'll ever meet, and that's what gets me into trouble," he says. "My ego comes from knowing I can change people's lives, I can

TAYLOR SWIFT

[Cont. from 19] just walked right into the studio and said, 'Here's the record, play this,'" says Mike Brophey, program director for WKLB, Boston's top country station. "She's a phenomenon."

Retailers predict the album will continue to sell strongly through Christmas and will also reignite sales of her first two albums; 2008's *Fearless* is already back in the Top 40. "It'll be a very strong record for us," says Ish Cuebas, vice



president of merchandising-music for Trans World Entertainment, one of the nation's biggest record chains. "All her other albums continue to sell steadily."

It doesn't hurt that *Speak Now* has been received as Swift's strongest, adding crunchy guitars and newly sophisticated lyrics about grown-up relationships – without alienating her young fan base. "It's not Miley Cyrus trying to jump from Hannah Montana to being a supersultry pop star," says Clay Hunnicutt, senior vice president of country programming for Clear Channel Radio. "Taylor has done a great job of a natural progression from teenage superstar to beautiful woman." **E**

IN THE NEWS

T.I. will release next album from jail

The rapper's new album will be out December 7th, about a month after he was sent to prison for violating his probation. (T.I. was released from prison in December 2009 after serving seven months on weapons charges, but



was arrested in L.A. in September on drug-possession charges.) The LP, originally called *King Uncaged*, has been renamed *No Mercy* and features appearances from **Eminem** and **Kanye West**. "This represents some of my best work, inspired by my most recent best and worst life experiences," T.I. said in a statement.

Digital-album sales in sustained slump

Sales of digital albums, once a bright spot in the slumping music industry, fell for the third straight quarter, according to Nielsen SoundScan. The three percent decrease follows quarterly drops of five and seven percent so far this year. "Consumers have more choices than ever on where to spend their entertainment dollar," says digital-music consultant Syd Schwartz. "Maybe more money at the iTunes Store is being spent on apps and TV rentals?" Some in the industry expect a mild digital-album sales bump during this holiday shopping season, with big new releases by **Kanye West**, the **Black Eyed Peas** and **My Chemical Romance**.

Gregory Isaacs, reggae singer, dies at 60

The smooth-voiced reggae singer, whose career spanned four decades, died on October 25th in London from lung cancer. He was 60. Nicknamed the "Cool Ruler" for his elegant, jazz-like phrasing, Isaacs was most famous for love



songs, including his biggest hit, 1982's "Night Nurse." "He's up there with my father," says **Ziggy Marley**. "He had his own unique aura and character – he was tough, cool, chill and always stylish." Isaacs released hundreds of albums during his career, the most recent being 2008's *Brand New Me*.



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**BUFFALO
SPRINGFIELD**
AGAIN Stills,
Furay and
Young

Buffalo Springfield, Pearl Jam Rock Bridge School Benefit

Also on bill: Elton John
and Leon Russell, Elvis
Costello, Jackson Browne

THE ANNUAL BRIDGE School Benefit has featured special acoustic sets by everybody from David Bowie and Paul McCartney to Metallica and Phish. But for the 24th edition, on October 23rd and 24th, organizer Neil Young unveiled a stunning finale: the first set since 1968 by his old band Buffalo Springfield. "From my perspective, we just picked up where we left off many, many years ago," says singer Richie Furay. "It was almost like going back in time."

Over two chilly, wet days at the Shoreline Amphitheater near San Francisco, baby boomers and local dot-com kids gathered for a remarkable, eclectic lineup: Jackson Browne and David Lindley tackled Bruce Springsteen's 1983 "Brothers Under the Bridge"; Kris Kristofferson broke out "Me and Bobby McGee"; Billy Idol revved up the crowd with a singalong on "Rebel Yell"; and Pearl Jam blasted through their eighth appearance at the benefit. At the end of their set, which included "Black" and "Better Man," Young joined them on his new tune "Walk With Me." "We played it for him backstage, and he said, 'That's basically it, but let me show you what you



**Kristofferson
and John
backstage**

aren't playing," says Pearl Jam guitarist Stone Gossard. "We've never had an interaction with him that wasn't a lesson in the sheer, raw love of rock."

The Bridge School was founded in 1986 to educate Neil and Pegi Young's son Ben, who suf-

**"It was almost like
going back in time,"
says Buffalo
Springfield's Furay.**

fers from cerebral palsy. It has grown into one of the premier schools in the country for students with severe speech and physical disorders. The concerts provide most of the school's operating costs - this year's raised more than \$1 million. "We keep it very comfortable for the artists," says Pegi. "They can come

out of their dressing rooms, intermingle and not be photographed every five minutes."

Young sat in with several acts - reprising his vocal cameo on Elton John and Leon Russell's "Gone with a Wind," covering the Everly Brothers' "Brand New Heartache" with Elvis Costello and Emmylou Harris. During Buffalo Springfield's set, Young mostly played guitar while Furay and Stephen Stills handled the vocals. After 12 songs - including "For What It's Worth" and "Bluebird" - the show wrapped with an all-star jam on "Rockin' in the Free World." So will there be more Springfield shows? "I'm never going to say never again," says Furay. "We have to let a couple of weeks go by and see how everybody feels. We certainly know now we can do it if we want."

ANDY GREENE

IN THE NEWS

Duran Duran team up with Mark Ronson

The band's 13th studio album, *All You Need Is Now*, is a collaboration with Amy Winehouse producer Mark Ronson.



**Simon
Le Bon**

After 2007's club-influenced *Red Carpet Massacre*, which featured Timbaland, the new LP

is a return to their New Wave roots. "I'm just another Duran Duran fan and know what another Duran fan would want to hear," Ronson said of the LP, out on iTunes on December 21st (an expanded CD is due in February). "There's nothing wrong with Duran Duran going back and sounding like they did in 1982 again."

MySpace relaunches as entertainment portal

Battered by competition from Twitter and Facebook, MySpace is retreating from social networking to become a music and entertainment portal. On October 27th, the site unveiled a redesign that emphasizes streaming videos and exclusive music. "We're creating a category called social entertainment," says MySpace Music's Courtney Holt, "which is very different than where we've been." Executives at News Corp., which bought MySpace for \$580 million in 2005, recently said that the site's losses were "not acceptable." Some experts suggest the redesign isn't enough to turn the site around. "Focusing on entertainment is the right strategy, but it might be too late," says digital-music venture capitalist David Pakman. "I question whether it's enough to keep them relevant."

Johnny Cash estate auctions over 1,000 items

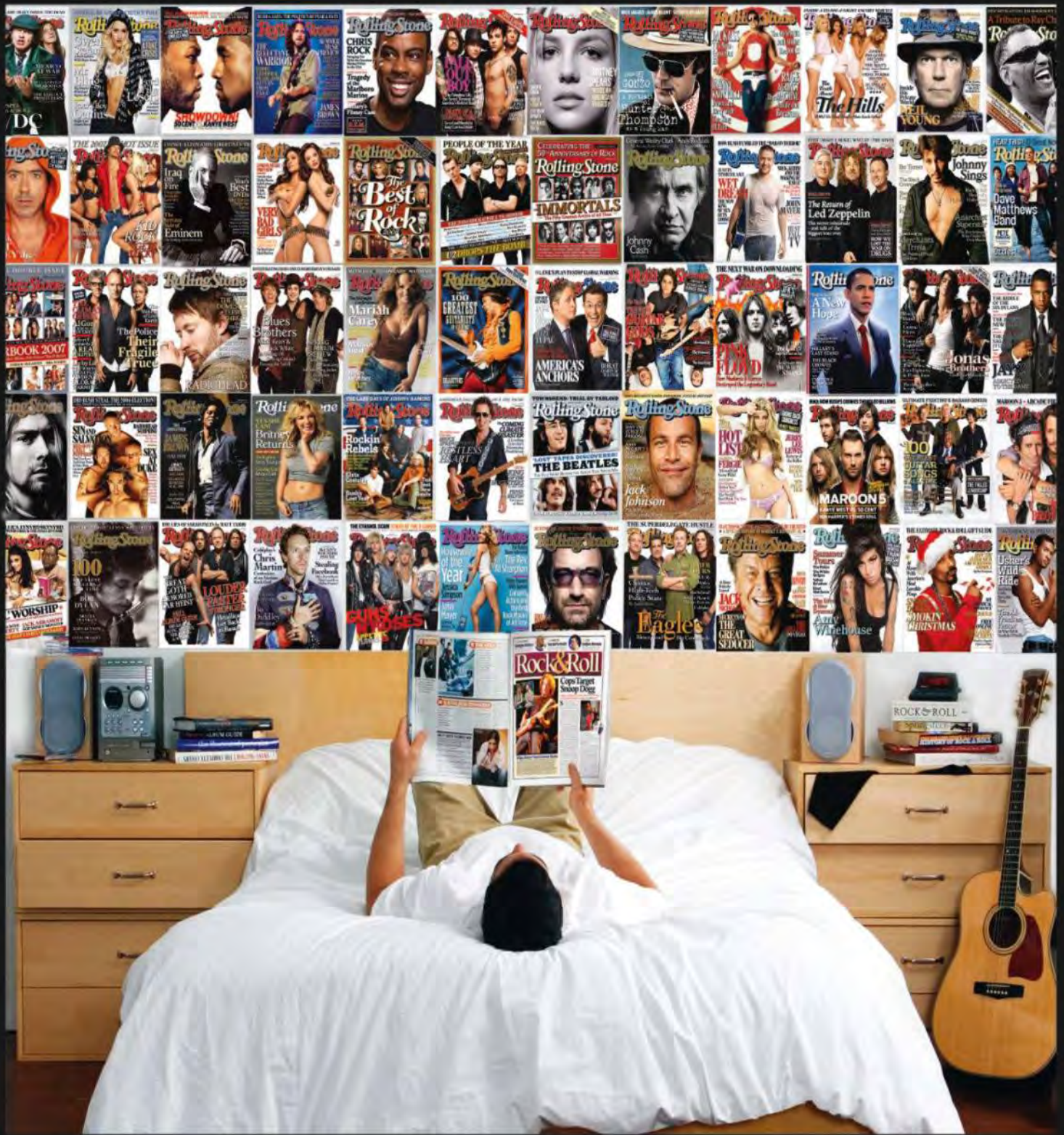
Highlights from the sale, which starts December 5th at L.A.'s Julien's Auctions, include Cash's Air Force uniform, a



Cash

1970 letter from President Nixon and the blue jumpsuit the singer wore at San Quentin prison in

1969. A 2004 auction of Cash items raised \$3.4 million, but auction-house CEO Darren Julien says this could be bigger: "Some of the family didn't want to let go of personal stuff in 2004. A few years have passed, and they were ready."



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THAT'S SO, LIKE, THEN AND NOW



LIAM FINN

“**NEIL
FINN**

YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF SUCCESS WITH CROWDED HOUSE. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT WITH THE BAND?

NEIL FINN: In a way, I measure that in terms of live gigs. We became successful in America with “Don’t Dream It’s Over” and that really did open a lot of doors for us. But from there on I feel like the success we had was driven by becoming a really good live band. A band that had our own approach to performing which was very inclusive of the audience and very open to deviation and mishaps.

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY HAS CHANGED SO MUCH. HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FOR A BAND LIKE CROWDED HOUSE NOW COMPARED TO THE 80s?

NF: It’s hard to be objective about since we’re now an older band. There’s a part of the industry that’s geared towards youth culture, that’s just the reality of it. To some extent it’s a very different scenario now but maybe a lot of the same factors are there and great music always shines through, I think. People are fixated on the business difficulties but I think good music finds its way.

CROWDED HOUSE TOOK A BREAK IN THE 90s.

WHAT SPURRED YOU TO REUNITE?

NF: I had a desire to reconnect with a certain spirit that we had in our early incarnation. I have to honestly say that in the aftermath of losing our drummer [Paul Hester] it brought a lot of things to the surface. I reconnected with Nick Seymour, and we started playing music together. It started to feel like I was in a band again, and I suppose that we wanted to put some good history on the board again. It was a very challenging time and I think playing music and being Crowded House has been a very good reconnection.



DENNIS KEELEY



THE VERY, VERY BEST OF CROWDED HOUSE IS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FROM EMI RECORDS.



“**MARK
MOTHERSBAUGH**

DEVO WAS AN ARTSY PUNK BAND THAT FOUND MAINSTREAM SUCCESS. WERE YOU SURPRISED TO REACH SUCH A BIG AUDIENCE?

MARK MOTHERSBAUGH: No. We thought what we were doing was a good thing and we actually thought it should’ve gotten even bigger. Seriously, that’s how I felt. But in retrospect, now I kind of marvel that we were able to get anything together because the record business is so difficult.

DO YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE FOR A BAND LIKE DEVO TO FIND THAT KIND OF SUCCESS TODAY?

MM: I think you can’t even compare what the music business was like 30 years ago with what it is today. The internet has permanently changed everything—the way artists create art, the way people observe it and enjoy it, and what art is has all been changed so radically. You can’t really compare now and then.

WHAT'S YOUR FONDEST MEMORY OF PLAYING WITH DEVO IN THE 70s AND 80s?

MM: It was probably right before we signed a record deal. We were at this place one summer where record companies were flying in from England to try to sign Devo. We had already put out a few songs on our own label that had gone to number one in different markets in Europe. It was a nice period of time. I remember laying on a bed in some funky one-bedroom that I rented in Hollywood thinking, “This isn’t going to last forever.”

YOU'VE HAD A LOT OF SUCCESS COMPOSING MUSIC FOR TV AND FILMS. HOW IS THAT PROCESS DIFFERENT FROM MAKING POP MUSIC?

MM: For me the idea of embracing doing music for TV was great for so many reasons because I always felt like everything I did was Devo anyhow. Even when I was writing music for films it all came from the same place. I always felt that it was permutations on a theme.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THE GLORY DAZE PROJECT?

MM: There’s some obvious stuff. They were proposing the idea with all music from the 80s. And I know the people that wrote a lot of the songs that they proposed it with. I’ve had relationships with people that wrote these songs; it’s kind of part of my life, this music. It’s really this great job because I’m writing things that are in the style of music from when I was writing pop songs.

CALL IT A COMEBACK

MARK MOTHERSBAUGH IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF DEVO AND MUSIC COMPOSER FOR *GLORY DAZE*

NEIL FINN IS A LEAD SINGER OF CROWDED HOUSE. THEY RECENTLY RELEASED THEIR 6TH ALBUM, *INTRIGUER*

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IN THE STUDIO

Gregg Allman, T Bone Burnett Team Up for Disc of Blues Covers

Album Low Country Blues
Due Out January 18th

WHEN GREGG ALLMAN and his brother Duane were growing up in Daytona Beach, Florida, in the 1950s, they'd stay up late listening to WLAC, a legendary Nashville radio station that broadcast blues across the East Coast. "After the other stations shut down, you could get the signal," he recalls. "They'd play Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Lightnin' Hopkins. After hearing Jimmy Smith on their jazz show, I knew I wanted to play a Hammond organ."

Fifty years later, Allman is paying tribute to the blues greats who inspired him, with a record of covers of tunes by Muddy Waters, Skip James and others. "It's been 14 years since I cut one," he says. "And I was hot to trot." One reason for the long break was that Allman's longtime producer, Tom Dowd, died in 2002. But Allman's manager arranged a meeting with T Bone Burnett in Memphis in 2009. "The first thing out of his mouth was, 'Wasn't Tommy Dowd killer?'" Allman says. "I soon learned that he was real from top to bottom."



AIN'T WASTING TIME Burnett and Allman in an L.A. studio.

Burnett gave him a CD of blues classics to check out, and in December Allman went to L.A. to start recording. "We got a bunch of the songs on the very first take," says Allman. "I was prepared to stay two months, but we cut 15 tracks in 11 days." With acoustic bass and Burnett's rustic sonics, the LP feels far more intimate than a typical Allmans LP. "With the Brothers, there's a groove," Allman says. "Doing it yourself, you got one head chef in the kitchen."

The experience went so well that he hopes Burnett will produce the next Allman Brothers

LP, their first since 2003. But before that, the singer will return to the road with the band in November – his first tour since receiving a liver transplant in June. And in March the Allmans will be back at New York's Beacon Theatre for their residency, after being kicked out this year for a Cirque du Soleil flop. "We got something on paper that says they won't do that again," he says. "But after my operation, I'm really just happy to be out playing. I'm going to thank God every night for giving me more years to live."

ANDY GREENE

Duffy Enlists Unlikely Team for New LP

Album Endlessly
Due Out December 7th

FOR THE FOLLOW-UP TO her 2008 pop-soul hit, *Rockferry*, Duffy assembled some unlikely collaborators: 1970s hitmaker Albert Hammond and the Roots' Ahmir Thompson. "It's a funny photograph," she says. "Albert's 66, and I'm a misfit from Wales, and you have America's finest hip-hop drummer."

After two years of heavy touring – Duffy estimates she played 700 shows – the singer

wasn't sure if she even wanted to record again. "It was insane," she says. But connecting with Hammond – famous for 1972's "It Never Rains in Southern California" and as the father of the Strokes' Albert Hammond Jr. – helped rejuvenate her. She resolved to make the new record

more slowly. "I had to learn how to pace myself," she says.

The LP mixes torch songs ("Endlessly") in the vein of her retro hit, "Warwick Avenue," but it also features modern disco funk like the single "Well, Well, Well." "I lived for these songs," she says. "But I'm not taking myself too seriously. I just want everybody to dance."

AUSTIN SCAGGS

Duffy onstage



STUDIO NOTES

R.E.M. aim for variety on 15th studio set

After 2008's riff-heavy *Accelerate*, the alt-rock pioneers headed in a different direction. "We did whatever the songs needed," says bassist Mike Mills of *Collapse Into Now*, due in the spring. "There's more variety – it



Michael Stipe

reminds me of *Automatic for the People*," R.E.M. recorded in New Orleans, Berlin and Nashville,

creating 12 tracks that Mills calls "less political and more personal." Later, they enlisted guests: Eddie Vedder on "It Happened Today," Patti Smith guitarist Lenny Kaye solos on one cut, and Smith herself sings on the closing ballad, "Blue." "She totally changed the song," says Mills. "It was a powerful thing to watch."

PATRICK DOYLE

Owl City crank up guitars on follow-up LP

Touring for 12 months to support 2009's *Ocean Eyes* had a big influence on Owl City's follow-up. Expect more guitar, as on "Deer in the Headlights," a synth-pop cut with power-



Young

chord blasts. "The music became aggressive live," says frontman Adam Young.

"That energy steered me in that direction." Other tracks detail the boredom of touring ("The Honey and the Bee") and leaving home for the road ("Astronauts"). "In high school, I wished I was somewhere else," he says. "Now that I've been to the big cities, I see home in a more romantic way."

DAVID BROWNE

Iron and Wine go pop

January's *Kiss Each Other Clean* was inspired by "1970s pop with in-your-face synth stuff," says leader Sam Beam. His first album with a full electric band, the LP sheds the singer's trademark



Beam

hushed folk rock for a "more focused" sound. Highlights include the reggae-tinged

"Rabbit Will Run" and the seven-minute "Your Fake Name Is Good Enough for Me," featuring a sax section and a Neil Young-style guitar breakdown.

P.D.



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HOT LIS

1 AMY WINEHOUSE "It's My Party"

Reunited and it feels so good! Wino and boy wonder Mark Ronson take us way back on this retro-rific cover of the Lesley Gore classic - or at least back to 2007, when the horn-and-breakbeat sound of *Back to Black* was inescapable. Awesomely, years of crack and lager-fueled lunacy haven't diminished Amy's crazily soulful, soulfully crazy delivery. Please, ma'am, may we have some more?



2 JIMI HENDRIX West Coast Seattle Boy

The Hendrix estate ups their box-set game to a whole new level: This release gathers everything from his early sideman work to hotel tapes (he covers "Tears of Rage"!). Hey, leave some for the next 10 boxes, guys!



3 DEADMAUS "Sofi Needs a Ladder"

Yo, DJ Pauly D, try beating up *this* beat! Canadian human bobblehead Deadmau5's latest electro monster sounds like Ke\$ha rapping about bad romance over Daft Punk (it's actually Tommy Lee's boo, Sofi Toufa). Maximum fist-pumpage guaranteed.



4 THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART "Heart in Your Heart-break"

Ever wish for a Belle and Sebastian/Smashing Pumpkins collabo? Us too! This gorgeously muscled-up wuss rock is the next best thing.

5 THE DECEMBERISTS "Down by the Water"

NPR listeners - get ready to cream your tote bags! Gillian Welch and R.E.M. 12-string jangle-master Peter Buck help the Oregon crew trade prog excess for gorgeous folk rock on this "The One I Love"-ish gem.

IN THE NEWS

Pearl Jam prepping live album for January

To commemorate their 20th anniversary, Pearl Jam are releasing *Live on Ten Legs* - a sequel to their 1998 live album, *Live on Two Legs*. Out January 18th, the 18-track LP is taken from shows between 2003 and 2010 and features hits ("Alive," "Jeremy") mixed with fan favorites ("Yellow Ledbetter," "Porch") and a cover of PIL's "Public Image." Pearl Jam wrapped a lengthy world tour in July, but "nothing is confirmed for next year," says guitarist **Stone Gossard**. "We might play some shows, but probably not that many."



Eddie Vedder

George W. Bush still hurt by Kanye's criticism

In his new memoir, *Decision Points*, George W. Bush himself writes that the "worst moment" of his presidency - his "all-time low" - was when **Kanye West** declared during a Hurricane Katrina celebrity telethon that "George Bush doesn't care about black people."

Damon Albarn, Flea forming supergroup

The **Gorillaz** frontman and the **RHCP** bassist are 75 percent done with an album of African-inspired music that they're recording with former **Fela Kuti** drummer **Tony Allen**. "Some of my favorite African musicians will be involved also," said Albarn.

Madonna launching gym chain

The singer will shape the design, look and music at a string of Hard Candy Fitness centers. The first gym will open on November 29th in Mexico City. More branches are planned for Asia, South America and Europe.



Madonna

Vince Neil joins 'Skating With the Stars' cast

The **Mötley Crüe** frontman will join the *Dancing With the Stars* spinoff, which begins November 22nd on ABC. Neil, who has a new memoir, *Tattoos and Tequila*, out now, actually skated competitively as a child. "I didn't go into this for a fun couple of weeks," he said. "I want to win this thing."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SAMIR HUSSEIN/GETTY IMAGES; RICK DIAMOND/WIREIMAGE; JOHNS PKU/ SPLASH NEWS; ANTHONY DOLANTE/ZUMA; PAVLA KOPECNA; LFI: SIMONE JOYNER/GETTY IMAGES

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Ask Dr. OZZY

Q I am a 47-year-old woman who has indulged in various chemicals and herbs for most of my life. How do I fight the urge to self-medicate?

—Anonymous, Camillus, New York

A It ain't easy. When I finally admitted that I had a problem with booze, my mum said, "Well, why don't you just stop bloody drinking, then?" But the truth is, very few people can do that. Fortunately, there's a lot of help out there. The fact that you understand you're self-medicating is a good thing. The next stage is to find a good therapist, or a local AA meeting. Having said that, the most important thing for me was changing my social circle. I don't hang out with addicts anymore. It's only then you realize how few people have a case of beer and an eight-ball of coke for breakfast.

Q My sons' metal band has been practicing in my home for years. Now my ears ring. Can you offer any advice?

—Grace, Miami

A A classic case of heavy-metal-itus. I suffer from permanent tinnitus because of all the years I've spent with my head either right next to, or literally inside, speaker cabinets – which means I've now got this constant ringing in my ears. It's also made me somewhat deaf (or "conveniently deaf," as Sharon calls it). There's an easy way to prevent tinnitus, and it's called buying a pair of earplugs. Do it now.

Q You still seem so youthful, good-looking and strong. What is your secret? Have you got some magic shake that gives you cheerfulness and health?

—Klausitta, Tallinn, Estonia

A It's called English breakfast tea, with a good brand of honey. I go through about 10 bowls of that magic potion a day. I also eat as much fruit as I can – forget bowls of brown M&M's. They also say that alcohol preserves ... but I don't believe that for one second.

Q How can I get my skin to be as flawless as yours?

—Nora, Dublin

A A three-inch-deep white-powder foundation helps. Otherwise, all I do is use a good natural cream – not the \$2,000-a-bottle caviar bollocks – every morning and night. What you've got to remember is that your face has to deal with sun and grime, and all other kinds of shit. Also, as skin ages, it gets drier, so you need to give it as much moisture as possible. I don't bother with facials, unless Sharon ropes me into it. She's got skin creams up the fucking yin-yang – which is all right if you're a chick. But speaking as the owner of a pair of testicles, I like to keep things simple.

If you want Dr. Ozzy's advice about health, sex and family matters, go to rollingstone.com/drozy.

CHECKING IN

Lars Ulrich

Metallica's drummer on the band's new concert DVD, live LP

"It was a hard-rock class reunion," drummer Lars Ulrich says of *The Big 4: Live From Sofia, Bulgaria*, a new two-DVD set from Metallica's 2010 tour with fellow thrash vets Slayer, Anthrax and Megadeth. The climax: all four bands jamming on "Am I Evil?" "The great news is it's not a clusterfuck," Ulrich says. "It's actually somewhat coherent."



How much have the four bands changed since the Eighties, when you all invented thrash?

There used to be a competitive element: Who's faster? Who's heavier? But we all established ourselves as unique and autonomous. There's not much Slayer in Anthrax, not much Anthrax in Megadeth. The bottom line, in 2010, is all of these bands offer something different from each other.

What was it like touring with your ex-guitarist, Megadeth's Dave Mustaine?

We've had two relationships – a press relationship and a private one. Sometimes the press egged on the combative element. But I've never had anything but love for him. The night before the first show, we invited the other bands to have dinner with us – no managers, no baby sitters. It was great, a rock & roll moment in an Italian restaurant in Warsaw. That vibe stuck around for the whole tour.

You are also releasing *Live at Grimey's*, a 2008 show at the Basement, a tiny club under a Nashville record store. I've been in there. How did your drum kit fit on that stage?

God bless our road crew. Maybe they carried it in one nut and bolt at a time. I think James Hetfield hit his head on the ceiling a couple of times. A couple of guys in front passed out. But that's the spirit of it, especially when you put it back-to-back with the biggest gig in America, Bonnaroo, which we did 18 hours later. There was a great contradictory energy to the whole thing. **DAVID FRICKE**

More Songs About Science and Sex

Inside Sean Lennon and girlfriend Charlotte Kemp Muhl's new band

WE'D BEEN DATING for a year and she never told me she was a songwriter," Sean Lennon says of his girlfriend, the model Charlotte Kemp Muhl, with whom he shares a West Village townhouse with a puppy and a baby albino python. Adds Muhl, 23, "We wanted to be together literally every minute of the day – the only way we could do that was by having a band."

That band, the Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger, has just released its debut album, *Acoustic Sessions*, which matches pretty



Muhl and Lennon

folk instrumentation – guitar, banjo, xylophone – with tight harmonies. Lyrically, *Acoustic Sessions* reflects the pair's shared interests. "We love nature, science and sex, and try to combine those things into everything we make," Muhl says.

When the duo play live, Lennon, 35, strums a guitar

and occasionally spans a crash cymbal as his left foot controls a tambourine. Muhl alternates between banjo, guitar and accordion. "It sounds like five or six people playing badly, but it's charmingly off-kilter," says Muhl.

It would be easy to compare their partnership to Lennon's parents', but the couple see their collaboration as different from John and Yoko's. "They were unified as a message and a movement, but she didn't want to write songs with my dad," Lennon says. "We love to collaborate. We just have a chemistry." **AUSTIN SCAGGS**

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Bruno Mars

The Hawaiian-born crooner on impersonating Elvis, jamming with Cee Lo and getting arrested in Vegas By Austin Scaggs

WHEN BRUNO MARS WAS FOUR YEARS OLD, his dad zipped him up in a spangled jumpsuit, slicked his hair back into a pompadour and put him onstage at the Sheraton Waikiki to sing Elvis Presley classics. "It was a real Vegas-caliber show," says Mars, now 25. "I'd rock the fuck out." By 16, he'd worked his way up to imitations of Ray Charles, Frankie Lyman and Jackie Wilson for his dad's rock and soul revue. But in the past year, Mars has made a mark with his own singing style; as one-third of the Smeezingtons, a production/songwriting team, he produced and sang on Travie McCoy's "Billionaire" and B.o.B's "Nothin' on You," and co-wrote Cee Lo Green's "Fuck You." Mars released his own album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*, in October, and it's filled with Coldplay-style pop rock (the Number One hit "Just the Way You Are"), smooth R&B ("Our First Time") and mellow Cali pop ("Count on Me"). The baby-faced Mars' rise has been stunningly swift and smooth – until he got busted for alleged narcotics possession in Las Vegas in September. Mars checked in from Copenhagen on a rare day off from his first world tour.

Why did your dad open an Elvis memorabilia shop in Hawaii?

He was a Fifties rock & roll and doo-wop junkie. He figured out that tourists in Hawaii go nuts for Elvis, so he opened an all-Elvis shop in Waikiki. He sold Elvis golf tees, Elvis liquor, photos, T-shirts, movie posters, concert tickets. . .

Who made your little Elvis outfits?

My mother. She was a killer seamstress. I had the '68 comeback special, with the leather on leather. I had the gold lamé suit, and the one from that show in Hawaii in the Seventies – the jumpsuit with the eagle on it. He was pretty Liberace'd-out then.

How did you learn to imitate other artists so well?

I used to study videotapes. I'd see things and say, "Man, if I could do that, I'm sure I could impress a lot of girls." That's why I learned how to play Hendrix's version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" from Woodstock – I had that down at 16. I remember seeing Elvis do "Hound Dog" on *The Milton Berle Show*, where he slowed it down at the end and the audience bugged out. And seeing James Brown on *The T.A.M.I. Show* – that changed my life.

Did you keep singing oldies as you grew up?

When I was a teenager I was in a doo-wop band called the Schoolboys; we'd do "I'm So Young" and "Why Do Fools Fall in

Love." I'd go to school, then go straight to the Ilikai Hotel and do an 8:00 show.

You have a song called "Grenade."

On *Jersey Shore*, that's slang for an ugly girl. Did the show inspire you?

No, man, that's what sucks so much. We wrote that song before *Jersey Shore* started. I remember telling the people at the label about "Grenade" and they started laughing, like, "Oh, that's going to be really funny." But it's not a joke song.

Do you have music memorabilia at your apartment in Los Angeles?

I used to have albums on the walls in my kitchen. The Police's *Synchronicity*, *Purple Rain*, and *Elvis Presley*. And I had a bunch of Sex Pistols posters. They're cool, man, and I'm jealous of their name. It's the best name ever.

I heard you named your guitars. What do you call them?

I'm a Fender junkie. I have a P Bass that I call Bophus Leon. And one called Red Sasha. And I got a Strat called Erika – I used her on *Saturday Night Live*.

Whose idea was it to write a song called "Fuck You"?

It was a collaborative effort between me and Cee Lo. We had the melody, and we kept singing, "I see you drivin' 'round town with the girl I love, fuck you. . . ." Then I went to the piano and came up with the piano riff. I actually thought the riff was an old Sixties or Seventies soul riff, but I guess I'd know by now if it wasn't original. When Cee Lo got in there and sang, we all got the chills.

Do you remember the first time you heard yourself on the radio?

In my car, my Honda Civic. "Nothin' on You" came on the radio. I was driving around Inglewood, up to no good.

Speaking of being up to no good, what were you doing in that bathroom at the Hard Rock in Vegas? Casinos are crawling with cops.

Man, you know I can't talk about that yet, as much as I'd love to. It's a legal matter.

On "Marry You," you sing about "dancing juice." What the hell is dancing juice?

C'mon, you know what the fuck dancing juice is! You've been on that dancing juice once or twice, I can tell! I heard the term in London. I was telling some dude about a big night out, and he said, "Yes, you were on that dancing juice" [laughs]. It just resonated with me, so I stuck it into "Marry You." My manager just thinks the song is about him, though. He calls himself the Dancing Jew.





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"I see myself making the transition from teenage heartthrob to adult singer." —Justin Bieber

Random Notes

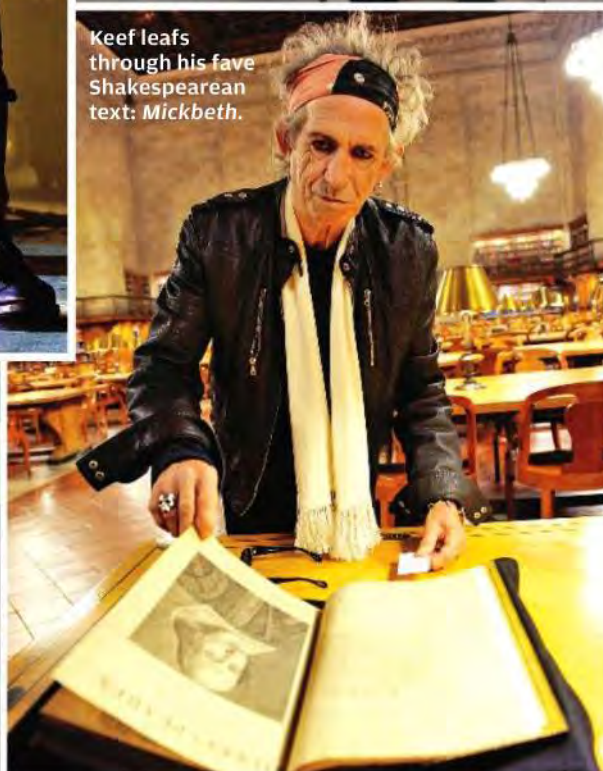
Return of the Romance

My Chemical Romance's Gerard Way rocked a flaming mohawk at a theater gig in London. The Jersey quintet previewed cuts from their new sci-fi concept LP, *Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys*. Catchy title there, fellas!



LADY AND THE COOP
Hanging out in London, Anderson Cooper finally admitted what everyone already knew: He's so into Gaga!

Keef leafs through his fave Shakespearean text: *Mickbeth*.



Rock in a Bard Place

Visiting the New York Public Library – to promote his memoir, *Life* – Keith Richards revealed that as a kid, he loved the blues (obvs) and going to the library (shocker!), saying it gave you "a hint that there was a thing called civilization." Of course, you could probably smoke in libraries back then. . . .



GET LUNCH OR DIE TRYIN'
Rumored boot-knockers Chelsea Handler and 50 Cent enjoyed tuna wraps and bottles of bub at a cafe in Malibu.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SHIRLAINE FORREST/WIREIMAGE; JJ/ROCHA/BAUERGRiffin.COM; KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; FAME PICTURES



VanWyngarden and guitarist James Richardson at New Orleans' Voodoo festival



Levine: "Yippee ki-yay, mofos!"



Colonel James sure plays some finger-pickin'-good guitar.

Halloween's Freaky Scene

Some rock stars – like Björk or Jared Leto – wear silly outfits daily, but most wait for Halloween. MGMT became Scooby-Doo's posse, with frontman Andrew VanWyngarden a dead ringer for bangin' gang-member Daphne; in L.A., Adam Levine partied with a vengeance as *Die Hard*'s John McClane; and in Louisville, My Morning Jacket's Jim James dressed as home-state hero Colonel Sanders for a show at the new KFC Yum! Center. "KFC's bigger than you think, unfortunately," he says.

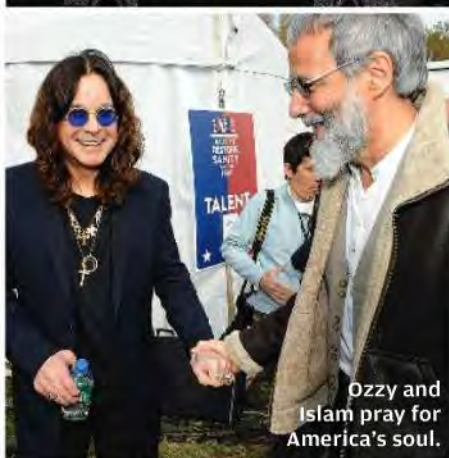


BACK IN THE SADDLE

Steven Tyler's off-key delivery of our national anthem at the Boston Bruins' home opener left fans muttering, "A little pitchy, dawg."



Colbert, Jeff Tweedy, Stewart and the Roots collabo'd at the D.C. National Mall.



Ozzy and Islam pray for America's soul.

Team America

At the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert led a crowd of 215,000 in a song about their love for America, "from the shores of Idaho to the shores of Kentucky." Also: Ozzy and Yusuf Islam (that's Cat Stevens, bitches!) rocked an unholy metal-folk mash-up of "Crazy Train" and "Peace Train" that defined the term "train wreck."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ERIKA GOLDING/GETTY IMAGES; CHARLES GALLAY; MATT JORDAN; JEFF SNYDER/PICTUREGROUP; SCOTT GRIES/PICTUREGROUP; SPLASH NEWS

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Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" gets the Glee treatment.

Glee's Unstoppable Roll

How the hit show, with its brilliant second season, filled the void left by MTV and became a pop-culture juggernaut **By Rob Sheffield**

MANY PEOPLE PREDICTED *Glee* would run out of gas after the novelty wore off. But these people turned out to be totally wrong, because the Fox musical juggernaut is on a historic run. This season just keeps getting stronger – every episode makes you wonder how they'll top it next week. The Britney

Glee

Tuesdays, 8 p.m., Fox

and *Rocky Horror* episodes aren't merely the show's funniest moments ever – they prove how *Glee* has taken its place at the heart of pop culture, where radio and MTV used to rule supreme. It's where music and dancing and high school and drama and sex all go to intersect – no TV show has really held that position before.

When Bob Dylan went rock & roll in 1965, he famously declared, "The only place where it's happening is on the radio and records. That's where the people hang out." In 2010, there might not be much left of records or the radio. But *Glee* has embraced that vision of

pop music as the place where the people hang out. Part of its greatness is its sincere nutcase enthusiasm for every style of music under the sun. Nothing is off-limits on *Glee*: They'll sing Color Me Badd, Syreeta, Aerosmith or Lady Gaga, coasting from show tunes to trash-rock oldies to hip-hop to Vegas razzle-dazzle. Like MTV in its prime, *Glee* will devour anything and turn it into pure spectacle. It's almost like the kids of New Directions are the last real pop stars, the only ones who have the *cojones* to embrace the strangeness of the American pop pageant.

Really, the key to this whole season is that amazing Britney episode, where Rachel says, "Let's face it, Finn, this relationship is only going to work if we're both losers." That sums up *Glee*, and that's also its message to America. Nobody at William McKinley High School listens to music for the sake of coolness – they're *all* loser underdogs, and they love music because it embodies that same underdog spirit.

So there's something incredibly generous and affectionate about the way *Glee* treats the

most godforsaken corners of pop music. *Glee* creator Ryan Murphy clearly loves to rescue forgotten obscurities, just as he loves to bring new resonance to famous tunes you thought were played out. Every episode seems to dig up at least one song you thought you'd never hear again – hell, in a lot of cases, they're songs you *hoped* you'd never hear again. But that boldly eclectic embrace is what gives *Glee* its kick. And that's why nothing

else on TV can touch its ambition or impact.

This season has been a huge leap for *Glee* in terms of warmth. *Glee* is still full of magnificently bitchy dialogue, especially when Santana Lopez is around: You gotta love how she tells Brittany, "I'm making out with you because I'm like a lizard. If I don't have something warm beneath me, I can't digest my food." But it's gotten more expansive emotionally as well as musically. The characters have become much more likable and humane, and that emotional growth has allowed *Glee* to avoid the disastrous missteps that have hobbled so many high school series, like *The O.C.* and *Gossip Girl*. The earliest episodes had a petulant edge, as if *Glee* arrived with a chip on its shoulder, but success has made *Glee* sweeter, and that's only made it more adventurous. The instant-classic Britney episode only worked because everyone was incredibly respectful to both the music and the girl, right down to her high-five with Artie. *Glee* couldn't have pulled that off last year.

Some people complain that this season contains less plot, but that just proves people really need something to complain about. Increasingly, *Glee* trusts the music to tell the story, and that's why it's hopping from one high to another. Brittany singing Britney's "I'm a Slave 4 U" wasn't just more entertaining than Season One's teen-mom subplot, it was more interesting and profound.

The *Rocky Horror* episode was a strange triumph, directed by *Hairspray*'s Adam Shankman. When Will Schuester is trying to explain this Seventies glam-rock musical to the students, he says, "It was for outcasts, people on the fringes who had no place left to go but were searching for someplace, anyplace, where they felt like they belonged." That's exactly the turf *Glee* has claimed, with an audacious spirit that the rest of the pop world seems to have abandoned. Yet that's the spirit that has made *Glee* a one-of-a-kind creative phenomenon. And that's why America loves *Glee* the way Britney loves pizza with ranch dressing. **PS**

THE WATCH LIST

The League

Thursdays, 10:30 p.m., FX

The second season of this comedy is as pungent as the first – a hilarious look at fantasy-football-league dudes who make one another's life crises infinitely more agonizing.

Bored to Death

Sundays, 10 p.m., HBO

The detective sendup keeps getting more twisted as Jason Schwartzman brings the neurosis, Ted Danson brings the pain and Zach Galifianakis constantly finds ways to humiliate himself.

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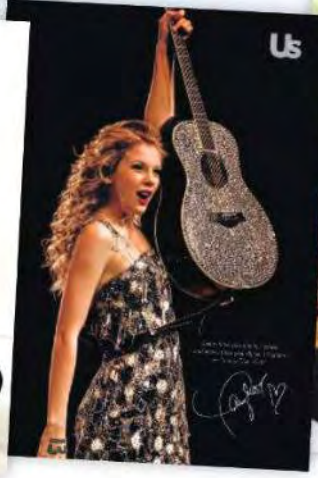
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ON NEWSSTANDS NOW

COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

From the editors of *Us Weekly* comes the ultimate guide to the country-pop superstar

- Private photos of Taylor & her pals
- Go inside her new home & tour bus
- Handwritten pages from her lyrics journal
- Her stylists share her fashion & beauty secrets



4 Big
Foldout
Posters
Inside



SPEAKER TO BE
John Boehner may get
"some electroshock
treatment" from the
Tea Party.

The GOP Comeback

Three leading political observers debate the Republican victory, the Tea Party's ascendancy – and what Obama must do next

THE MORNING AFTER AMERICANS went to the polls, we sat down at the ROLLING STONE offices in New York with the two political experts we have consulted after every national election since 2004. David Gergen, director of the Center for Public Leadership at the Kennedy School at Harvard, has served in the White House as a senior adviser to presidents Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Clinton. Peter D. Hart, known for his nonpartisan poll for NBC News and *The Wall Street Journal*, has conducted public-opinion research for 30 governors and 40 U.S. senators, from Hubert Humphrey to Ted Kennedy. Also joining us this year was Matt Taibbi, contributing editor for ROLLING STONE and author of *Griftopia: Bubble Machines, Vampire Squids and the Long Con That Is Breaking America*.

JANN S. WENNER AND ERIC BATES

How big a defeat is this for Democrats?

PETER HART: I've been doing Election Night for 46 years, and next to 1980, this is the hardest to stomach. It was just an old-fashioned beating. First and foremost,

it was about turnout. Republicans and the elderly showed up, but Democrats and the young didn't. Only about one in 10 voters was under the age of 30 this year, compared to one in five in 2008. Blacks and Latinos also turned out in smaller numbers: They represented only 18 percent of voters this year, compared to 22 percent in '08. The Democrats won on both the coasts and almost nowhere in between. Was it a big defeat? You'd better believe it.

DAVID GERGEN: What we are seeing now is the high-water mark for the Obama presidency, at least domestically. No matter what else happens, even if he gets re-elected, he will never be as powerful as he was during his first two years. After Obama's election in 2008, I was one of those who believed that we were at a turning point – that the Reagan tide was receding, and we would see a cycle of progressive politics for 15 or 20 years. To have that reversed so quickly is stunning. This is the first time since the Truman-Eisenhower years that we've had three elections in a row in which more than 20 House seats have changed hands. We may be moving away from po-

litical cycles and into a period of extreme volatility in our politics, just as we have extreme volatility in our markets.

MATT TAIBBI: My take is that it's not as bad as it seems. The first thing I thought when I saw the results come in last night wasn't all the gains the Republicans made, but the places where they should have won and didn't – mainly because they had Tea Party candidates like Sharron Angle and Christine O'Donnell who had won primary battles and then proved unable to beat Democrats in the general election. What we saw last night was the Tea Party taking over the Republican Party. That more radicalized, extreme wing of the party is going to play a kingmaking role in the presidential election in 2012 – and that's going to make it impossible for the Republicans to retake the White House. *How big a force was the Tea Party in this election?*

HART: We asked Republicans who are part of the Tea Party – slightly more than 20 percent of registered voters – if they consider themselves first and foremost to be a Tea Party person or a Republican. Half

of them said, "I'm Tea Party through and through." That underscores exactly what Matt is saying.

GERGEN: If it were not for the extra boost of enthusiasm the Tea Party provided, I imagine the Republicans would have won only 40 to 50 seats, instead of the 60-plus they gained. But the Tea Party also makes it harder in the future for Republicans to maintain a coherent party. Matt is right that they will have a large voice in the nomination process in 2012. But one cannot discount that someone could arise, as Reagan did in the past, who can bridge the differences within the party and keep people united.

TAIBBI: To me, the main thing about the Tea Party is that they're just crazy. If somebody is able to bridge the gap with those voters, it seems to me they will have to be a little bit crazy too. That's part of the Tea Party's litmus test: "How far will you go?"

GERGEN: I flatly reject the idea that Tea Partiers are crazy. They had some eccentric candidates, there's no question about that. But I think they represent a broad swath of the American electorate that elites dismiss to their peril.

HART: I agree with David. When two out of five people who voted last night say they consider themselves supporters of the Tea Party, we make a huge mistake to suggest that they are some sort of small fringe group and do not represent anybody else.

TAIBBI: I'm not saying that they're small or a fringe group.

GERGEN: You just think they're all crazy.

TAIBBI: I do.

GERGEN: So you're arguing, Matt, that 40 percent of those who voted last night are crazy?

TAIBBI: I interview these people. They're not basing their positions on the facts – they're completely uninterested in the facts. They're voting completely on what they see and hear on Fox News and afternoon talk radio, and that's enough for them.

GERGEN: The great unwashed are uneducated, so therefore their views are really beneath serious conversation?

TAIBBI: I'm not saying they're beneath serious conversation. I'm saying that these people vote without acting on the evidence.

GERGEN: I find it stunning that the conversation has taken this turn. I disagree with the Tea Party on a number of issues, but it misreads who they are to dismiss them as some kind of uneducated know-nothings who have somehow seized power in the American electorate. It is elitist to its core. We would all be better off if we spent more time listening to each other rather than simply writing them off.

HART: I agree. The point here is that the Obama administration would be at

their own peril to somehow misread this as a fringe, unacceptable group of people. This is a huge portion of the electorate, and they represent a core within the Republican Party.

We can talk about the Tea Party as a factor, but some of this clearly has to be laid at Obama's doorstep. What missteps did he make that contributed to the Republican victory in this election?

HART: To begin with, he failed to live up to his covenant, and that was change we could believe in. The public was looking for a change agent for the average person. They didn't like that all the special interests and the banks were bailed out, the auto industry was bailed out, and at the same time unemployment and the economy got worse. At the end of the day, the president lost the middle of the electorate, he lost the suburbs and he lost blue-collar America. He lost seven of the eight Mid-

GERGEN: Had the president's fundamental approach for the past two years been about jobs, he would have been a lot better off coming into the election. People would have felt that he was on their side. He helped to stabilize the major banks, which prevented us from going over a cliff, and he deserves credit for averting another Great Depression. But he clearly made a strategic miscalculation in assuming that the stimulus would keep unemployment under eight percent. In retrospect, it was a blunder to spend so much time on health care instead of jobs. If Franklin Roosevelt's most important accomplishment of his first two years had been a health care bill, we'd have all said that was nuts.

People were also upset that he compromised on every single thing that came up, cutting backroom deals rather than standing up for his core principles. It was easy for voters to say, "Throw the bums out



west states, from Pennsylvania to Iowa, that he carried in 2008. The Democrats lost all six Senate races there, and at least five governorships.

TAIBBI: I agree with Peter. There was a moment right after Obama got elected where he had an opportunity to really distinguish himself from the policies of the Republican Party. Instead, he essentially continued the Bush policies, and even retained some of the same people who were the architects of the Bush bailouts, most notably Timothy Geithner. Democrats could have stood up and explained how financial interests had taken advantage of people – why everyone was losing their jobs, why there was this credit crash and mortgage crash – but they didn't do that. What they did instead was invest all their political capital in rescuing the financial sector, hoping it would trickle down to ordinary people. Blue-collar people were craving an explanation for why their economic situation was so bad, and the Democrats just didn't give them that explanation.

– and he's just another one of the bums."

GERGEN: We're all mystified by the fact that this was a fellow who was able to make both the liberal base of the party and the moderates believe that he was their great hope, yet he wound up making both of those groups disappointed. It's very surprising.

When we met to assess the election two years ago, it seemed that the Karl Rove tactic of playing to the extremes might be a thing of the past. How did riling up the base make such a comeback so quickly?

TAIBBI: A lot of it has to do with the vacuum of power in the Republican Party. After the 2008 election, the party had no leadership, no coherent message and no ideas that had any kind of traction. Bush's presidency was completely discredited, and they suffered this terrible defeat with a conventional mainstream Republican, John McCain. That created an opportunity for all these more radical ideas to step to the forefront, and it turned out that they were perfectly suited to the moment.

GERGEN: I think it's more complicated than saying that the Republicans went to their base. The media has spent way too much time on the Tea Party and Christine O'Donnell and far too little time on the emergence of moderate-right Republicans like Rob Portman and John Kasich in Ohio. There are as many traditional conservatives coming into office on the Republican side as there are Tea Partiers. You have to remember, this was not a vote for the Republican Party – it was a negative election about what was going on in Washington. That's why the Republicans are smart to be humble about this election. I think both parties are now on probation. The voters are basically saying, "We'll put you guys in there, and if you don't solve this, we'll throw you out." *What do the Democrats and Obama have to do now, given the Republican majority they face in the House?*

HART: First, get the economy working. Job one is the only job, and that's getting people back to work. Second, find a way to connect with average voters. In the past few months, Obama started going into people's backyards during the campaign. He was closer to them physically, but he

they're sitting on it because he gave it to them.

GERGEN: You don't think they're disappointed?

TAIBBI: I'm sure they would have preferred the Republican agenda, where they would get 100 percent of what they want. Under Obama, they only got 90 percent. He bailed out the banks and didn't put anybody in jail. He gave \$13 billion to Goldman Sachs under the AIG bailout alone and then did nothing when Goldman turned around and gave themselves \$16 billion in bonuses. He passed a financial-reform bill that contains no significant reforms and doesn't really address the issue of "too big to fail." FDR, in the same position, passed radical reforms that really put Wall Street and the business community under his heel.

GERGEN: If you talk to many CEOs, you'll find that they're very hostile toward Obama.

TAIBBI: Who cares what these CEOs think? I don't care – they're 1/1,000th of a percent of the electorate. They're the problem. Obama needs to get other people's votes, not their votes.

GERGEN: It's not their votes he needs to

he pursued a policy of nonaction, and that left him vulnerable with ordinary people who wanted an explanation for why the economy went off the cliff.

GERGEN: I don't think his problem is he hasn't put enough people in jail. I agree that when people commit fraud, they ought to spend some time in the slammer. But there's a tendency in today's Democratic Party to turn away from someone like Bob Rubin because of his time at Citigroup. I served with him during the Clinton administration, when the country added 22 million new jobs, and Bob Rubin was right at the center of that. He was an invaluable adviser to the president, and he is now arguing that one of the reasons this economy is not coming back is that the business community is sitting on money because of the hostility they feel coming from Washington.

TAIBBI: I'm sorry, but Bob Rubin is exactly what I'm talking about. Under Clinton, he pushed this enormous remaking of the rules for Wall Street specifically so the Citigroup merger could go through, then he went to work for Citigroup and made \$120 million over the next 10 years. He helped push through the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000, which deregulated the derivatives market and created the mortgage bubble. Then Obama brings him back into the government during the transition and surrounds himself with people who are close to Bob Rubin. That's exactly the wrong message to be sending to ordinary voters: that we're bringing back this same crew of Wall Street-friendly guys who screwed up and got us in this mess in the first place.

GERGEN: That sentiment is exactly what the business community objects to.

TAIBBI: Fuck the business community!

GERGEN: Fuck the business community? That's what you said? That's the very attitude the business community feels is coming from many Democrats in Washington, including some in the White House. There's a good reason why they feel many Democrats are hostile – because they are.

TAIBBI: It's hard to see how this administration is hostile to business when the guy it turns to for economic advice is the same guy who pushed through a merger and then went right off and made \$120 million from a decision that helped wreck the entire economy.

We've talked about the Democrats. What do Republicans have to do now to build on their victory?

GERGEN: The danger for the Republicans is that they will overplay their hand. We've had a pattern of newly elected people who feel they have a mandate of some sort, and then go beyond what the public really wants. Clinton got his hand slapped early on because voters thought he had overreached to the left. Then Newt Gin-

“What we’re seeing is the high-water mark for the Obama presidency,” says Gergen. “He will never be as powerful again.”

never connected with them emotionally. Third, look beyond his current group of insiders in the White House and find new people who can help him survive, the way Bill Clinton sought out Leon Pannetta after Republicans retook the House in 1994.

GERGEN: If Obama is going to govern as well as prosper politically, he has to pivot back toward the center. He must embrace some sort of Social Security reform, just as Clinton did with NAFTA, even though his base will scream about it. He must also enlarge his inner circle by bringing in people who have the trust of the business community. One of the surprises for me has been that even though Obama rescued the banks, the alienation of the business community has reached a point that is threatening the recovery. Business people are sitting on a lot of money and not investing it because there is so much uncertainty about taxes, health care, financial regulations and energy. Obama's got to be more of a partner with the business community.

TAIBBI: I have to disagree. The notion that the business community is disappointed with Obama because of what he's done in the past two years, I just don't see that. They're sitting on a lot of money, but

get – it's their investments and jobs.

In 2008, Obama managed to win over both the financial sector and the progressive wing of the Democratic Party. Now he seems to have pissed off both ends of that coalition.

HART: There's a fascinating point from the exit polls that supports part of what Matt is saying. When you ask voters who is most to blame for the current economic crisis, 35 percent say it's Wall Street bankers, 29 percent say it's George W. Bush and 23 percent say it's Barack Obama. However, among those who say it's Wall Street bankers, 56 percent voted for the Republicans in this election. So go figure.

That said, I worry that if the president and the Democrats were to follow Matt's advice, they would be appealing to the smallest segment of the electorate. Right now Obama has the support of 85 percent of Democrats. If you want to get America back to work, you don't want to put the people who have the ability to invest on the other side of their fence.

TAIBBI: So if we put people in jail for committing fraud during the mortgage bubble, we're endangering our ability to win over the CEOs? Obama should have made sure that there are consequences for people who committed crimes. Instead,

TEA PARTY STAR
Marco Rubio of Florida
is already being touted as
a VP candidate in 2012.



grich and George W. Bush got slapped for overreaching to the right. Now Obama has gotten his hand slapped for pursuing too much government. There's going to be a tendency on the part of some Republicans to sense blood in the water – Obama's wounded, let's spend the next two years taking him out. But the public is clearly looking for action on the economy, not for more politics in the sandbox.

Are there any areas where Democrats and Republicans can reach consensus in the next two years? Or are we looking at total war right up until November 2012?

HART: There are potentially some areas of agreement in regulatory reform and energy. Social Security could also be an interesting bridge, but it's probably a bridge too far. I think the wars are going to be fought over the budget and health care.

GERGEN: On foreign policy, they have the potential to reach an agreement on the endgame in Afghanistan as well as Iraq, and to present a forceful case to the world on Iran. On the domestic front, one of the trickiest questions we're going to face is a showdown between the Republicans and the president over a potential shutdown of the government. We all remember that Clinton used that masterfully to gain an upper hand against Newt Gingrich. That moment seems to be in the offing again, and I don't know how either side is going to play it.

The Republicans could also try to repeal health care reform.

GERGEN: We're in a situation in which each side has a veto. Jim Schlesinger, who served as secretary of both defense and energy, once said that everybody in Washington has the capacity to say no, but nobody has the capacity to say yes. That makes for gridlock, and paralyzes government. That's a very real possibility we face – one that will hurt both sides heading into 2012. If joblessness is still high, you've got a wounded Obama, you've got an angry Tea Party, where are we then? We're a

country in decline – and that, to me, is the biggest fear.

HART: Despite all the seats Republicans picked up, there are still three gaping holes in their image. First, their image remains as negative as it was after the election in 2008 – 41 percent of registered voters have negative feelings toward the Republicans. Second, half of those who identify with the Republicans care more about the Tea Party than the GOP, and they're going to hold the leadership's feet to the fire; John Boehner is about to get some electroshock treatment. Third, as the victories of Jerry Brown in California and Harry Reid in Nevada underscore, the fastest-growing segment of the electorate is the Hispanic vote. Democrats had a 22-point advantage among

“Among those who blame Wall Street for the economic crisis, 56 percent voted for the Republicans,” says Hart. “Go figure.”

Hispanics in 2004; today that has grown to a 38-point advantage. Anti-immigration rhetoric may have driven Republican voters to the polls this year, but they will pay a price for it in 2012.

TAIBBI: You would certainly think that if the Republicans spend the next two years screeching about immigration and Medicare and Social Security, they would lose votes with Hispanics, the elderly and, well, people in general. But you never know how American voters will react when you take their benefits away. I can envision a scenario where the Republicans push for steep cuts in social services in the name of balancing the budget, then just keep the social cuts and leave out the balancing-the-budget part, which is what they did in the Bush years. And then the dingbats in the Tea Party will throw a parade for them in 2012.

Speaking of 2012, which of the Republican presidential hopefuls benefited the most from this election?

GERGEN: There's no question that Sarah Palin has gained more from this as a Republican kingmaker. But I imagine there's going to be a search for someone else to serve as the bridge-builder I mentioned earlier. To me, the leading possibility, if he can overcome the brand-name problem, is Jeb Bush. Two years ago, you would have said, “Impossible.” Today, quite possible. He's a much more viable candidate today than he was two years ago, and he's one of the few people I know who could bridge the various factions within the party and hold people together. So I'm putting my money on Jeb Bush as a potential star who might emerge and unite the party.

TAIBBI: Whew. I was already depressed this morning, but thinking about another Bush as the better-case scenario in an either/or political future makes me want to douse myself with kerosene and jump into a blast furnace.

So where do we stand? By splitting control of the House and Senate, have voters doomed us to two more years of partisan gridlock?

GERGEN: The looming, transcendent question is whether we can govern ourselves as a people, or whether we're going to just drift into a serious decline. My hope is that Obama will head to the center and the Republicans will be a constructive opposition. It would be good if they could actually get things done as we did in the latter Clinton years, like balancing the budget and welfare reform. If the Republicans play an

obstruction game for the next two years, it is possible that they could succeed in 2012, but it would be a Pyrrhic victory. It would be taking over a country that is almost ungovernable by that point, a nation that is going to be ever closer to the edge.

HART: David draws an eloquent picture, as he always does, of how we would like the world to be. But during the Clinton period in the late Nineties, there wasn't Fox News. Fox not only demonizes everything the president says and does – it has become the major vetting group for Republicans, and it will not allow any kind of compromise to exist. It's like the ending of *The Sun Also Rises*, when Lady Brett Ashley nestles in the arms of Hemingway's hero and imagines what their life together might have been like. She says, “Wouldn't it be nice?” It would be nice, but I don't think we're going to get there.



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EMINEM

The Road Back From Hell

Three years ago he almost died. Now he's sober and has one of the biggest-selling records of 2010. Inside the very private world of hip-hop's reclusive genius. By Josh Eells

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER



UPON ARRIVING AT EMINEM'S RECORDING STUDIO – AN anonymous gray hit factory in suburban Detroit – a first-time visitor will be met at his car by a large, possibly armed man named Big 8, who will have been watching from an alley across the street. “Can I help you, sir?” he’ll ask, in a tone that does not suggest an eagerness to help. Only after you have proved to not be a threat will you be escorted past the security cameras and heavily reinforced metal door and into the place Eminem calls “my second home.”

Inside, Big 8 is all smiles. The studio is a grown-up play land: *Punisher* comic books, *lucha libre* masks, a popcorn machine. A large painting of Biggie and 2Pac graces one wall, while a plaque leaning against another celebrates Eminem's status as SoundScan's Artist of the Decade: 32 million albums sold in the past 10 years, trouncing runners-up the Beatles. A dozen years into his career, he remains one of pop's most bankable stars – a rare feat for any artist, and, for a rapper, almost unprecedented.

After half an hour, Eminem emerges from the vocal booth, where he's working on tracks with Dr. Dre for Dre's long-awaited *Detox*. He's dressed in black cargo shorts and a gray T-shirt, and a diamond crucifix hangs from his neck. His features are delicate, nearly feminine, and his hair is a deep, natural shade of brown. He bears little resemblance to the foul-mouthed, bleached-blond Slim Shady who once made it his mission to terrorize America. “What up, man,” he says softly by way of introduction. “I’m Marshall.”

It's a rainy afternoon in October, three days before Eminem's 38th birthday. He sits in the cluttered studio office, at a desk strewn with over-the-counter pharmaceuticals – Aleve, 5-Hour Energy – and Ziploc bags of minipretzels. Much has been made of the rapper's volatile temper, not least by Eminem himself (he once spent two years on probation for felony weapons charges after an altercation outside a bar), but in conversation he's thoughtful and polite, albeit not in a way you'd mistake for friendliness. There's little evidence of the prankster you hear on his records, and when discussing his personal life, he has a tendency to retreat, gazing at the floor and covering his mouth like a football coach hiding his plays.

Our conversation is interrupted by frequent bathroom breaks. Eminem loves Diet Coke, which he guzzles obsessively from a soda fountain in the lobby. At one point, he fills a 16-ounce cup nearly to the brim, then sets it down next to another full cup he'd forgotten he had. He's a chain drinker, in other words, and as a result he pees constantly. Asked why he prefers fountain drinks to cans, he turns serious. “There's aspartame in the cans,” he says. “They say it's been known to cause

cancer, so I cut that shit out. There's no aspartame in the fountain.”

A few years ago, an artificial sweetener would have been the least of Eminem's worries. For much of the period from 2002 to 2008, he was addicted to a dangerous cocktail of prescription medication, including Ambien, Valium and extra-strength Vicodin. He tried rehab in 2005, then fell into an even deeper tailspin the next year, following the shooting death of his best friend, DeShaun “Proof” Holton. It wasn't until he nearly died from an accidental methadone overdose at the end of 2007 that Eminem finally decided to get clean. Last month, he celebrated two and a half years of sobriety.

His latest album, *Recovery*, deals with addiction and his struggles to conquer it. It is, by his standards, surprisingly positive. Released in June, it sold 741,000 copies in its first week – Eminem's sixth consecutive Number One – and will probably end up the bestselling album of 2010. It has also spawned two Number One singles, the inspirational “Not Afraid” and the Rihanna-featuring “Love the Way You Lie,” which topped the charts for four weeks straight. In September, he cemented his return with a series of shows with Jay-Z at baseball stadiums in Detroit and New York. All in all, it's a remarkable comeback for a man who might not have lived to make another album.

Yet for all Eminem's triumphs, it's sometimes hard to tell if he's enjoying himself. By his own account, he lives a pretty solitary existence. He has a 15,000-square-foot fortress in the Detroit suburbs that he bought from the former CEO of Kmart, where he lives with 14-year-old Hailie – his biological daughter with his two-

time ex-wife, Kim – and two adopted daughters: eight-year-old Whitney, Kim's daughter from a previous marriage, and 17-year-old Alaina, the daughter of Kim's twin sister. Before our interview began, he made it clear that he preferred not to discuss his family. Still, from the few glimpses he offers, a picture emerges of a devoted, protective father trying to focus on the two things he loves most: his children and his work.

Well, that and video games. Eminem is a vintage video-game fiend. The studio lobby is filled with arcade classics: *Donkey Kong*, *Frogger*, *Space Invaders*. His interest grew after seeing a documentary called *The King of Kong*, about a mild-mannered engineer named Steve Wiebe and his quest to capture the world *Donkey Kong* record. (Two of Eminem's machines are autographed by Wiebe.) He says he's also trying to break Wiebe's record, and on one of his *Donkey Kong* games, all six high scores belong to MBM – Marshall Bruce Mathers.

The bad guy in *The King of Kong* is named Billy Mitchell, a loudmouthed jerk not entirely unlike a certain white rapper. Cocky and snide, he's an ideal dramatic foil for the sweet, modest family man Wiebe. “It's a perfect contrast,” Eminem says of the pairing. “A hero and a villain.” Just which of those two he himself wants to be is one of the many things Eminem is trying to figure out.

Congratulations on your success with “Recovery.” Has it surprised you at all?

I'm a little surprised. I was certainly more confident in this album than the last one. It feels good to have your work respected again. Winning awards is cool, but at this point, I'm in it for the sport.

What's been the highlight so far?

The shows with Jay-Z. Just being on-stage in front of that many people, being able to command the crowd but not having to fall back on old crutches like drugs and drinking. You do get nervous – anybody who says they don't is lying. But hitting that stage now, I want to feel those nerves. To look out and actually see girls crying and shit, it's overwhelming. But not like it used to be, where I felt like I needed to [mimes drinking from a bottle].

Does fame feel different this time?

It feels like I have a better grasp on it. A lot of the problems I had with fame I was bringing on myself. A lot of self-loathing, a lot of woe-is-me. Now I'm learning to see the positive side of things, instead of, like, “I can't go to Kmart. I can't take my kids to the haunted house.”

Your past few albums were produced mainly by you and Dr. Dre. On this one you worked with several new producers.

It was just time for fresh blood. There's so many talented producers I always wanted to work with, but I was never sure if it would gel. I think it was a fear of fail-

“The doctors told me I'd done the equivalent of four bags of heroin. THEY SAID I WAS TWO HOURS FROM DYING.”

Contributing editor JOSH EELLS profiled the Black Keys in RS 1105.



Guess Who's Back

(1) Eminem at a New York club around when "My Name Is" broke in 1999. (2) At Detroit's Comerica Park with Jay-Z in September. (3) With his best friend, Proof, who died in 2006.



ure. Like, "What if I bring these guys out, and I don't come up with anything?" So I just stayed in my element, where I was comfortable. But I was talking to my boy Denaun [Porter, of D12] one day, and he said, "Yo, man - you gotta get off your island." I don't mean to keep going back to it, but when I got clean, I started doing things I wouldn't otherwise have done.

Your music also seems more serious now.

Around the tail end of [2004's] *Encore*, the songs started getting really goofy. "Rain Man," "Big Weenie," "Ass Like That" - that's when the wheels were coming off. Every day I had a pocketful of pills, and I would just go into the studio and goof off. When I went to Hawaii with Dre for [what became *Recovery*], there was a turning point lyrically. I was sitting in the car listening to these older songs of mine, trying to figure out, "Why doesn't the new stuff hit me like it used to?" That's when I started to get away from the funny shit and do songs that had some emotion and aggression to them again.

What are you working on now?

Right now me and Dre are busy with *Detox*. It's really close - I want to say we're halfway done. I'm lending an ear, helping him write, laying hooks - whatever I can do. As for my stuff, I'm just doing

guest verses for other people's records. I try to stay recording, because if I don't, I get rusty. I'm very paranoid about writer's block - I had it for four years, and it drove me fucking crazy. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't think of shit. The pills had a lot to do with it. Just wiping out brain cells. I don't know if it sounds like I'm making excuses, but the absolute truth is a lot of my memory is gone. I don't know if you've ever taken Ambien, but it's kind of a memory-eraser. That shit wiped out five years of my life. People will tell me stories, and it's like, "I did that?" I saw myself doing this thing on BET recently, and I was like, "When was that?"

Did you save much of your writing from that time?

Yeah. It fucking creeps me out. Letters all down the page - it was like my hand weighed 400 pounds. I have all that shit in a box in my closet. As a reminder that I don't ever want to go back.

When did you first get into drugs?

It didn't really start until my career took off. I was probably in my early 20s before I even kicked back my first beer. But the bigger the shows got, the bigger the after-parties; drugs were always around. In the beginning it was recreational. I could come off tour and be able to shut it off. I'd spend time with the kids, and I'd be OK.

It probably started to become a problem around the *8 Mile* movie. We were doing 16 hours on the set, and you had a certain window where you had to sleep. One day somebody gave me an Ambien, and it knocked me the fuck out. I was like, "I need this all the time." So I got a prescription. After four or five months, your tolerance starts building. You start breaking off another piece of the pill that's supposed to be for tomorrow. Then, when I got off probation for my felonies [in 2003], and I didn't have to drop urine anymore, the reins came off. On the *Anger Management 3* tour [in 2005], I was fucked up every night.

How bad did it get?

I was taking so many pills that I wasn't even taking them to get high anymore. I was taking them to feel normal. Not that I didn't get high. I just had to take a ridiculous amount. I want to say in a day I could consume anywhere from 40 to 60 Valium. And Vicodin... maybe 20, 30? I don't know. I was taking a lot of shit.

My everyday regimen would be, wake up in the morning and take an extra-strength Vicodin. I could never take more than one and a half, because it tore up my stomach lining. So I'd take the one and a half, and it'd kind of be Vicodin throughout the day. Then, as the evening crept up, around 5:00 or 6:00, I'd start with a Valium or two, or three, or four. And every hour on the hour, I'd pop four or five more. The Ambien would put me over the top to go to sleep.

Toward the end, I don't think the shit ever put me to sleep for more than two hours. It's very similar to what I've read about Michael [Jackson]. I don't know exactly what he was doing, but I read that he kept getting up in the middle of the night, asking for more. That's what I was doing - two, three times a night, I would get up and take more.

Where were you getting it? Did you have a dealer?

When you're an addict, you find ways. In the beginning, there were doctors who gave me prescriptions - even after I got out of rehab.

Any idea how much money you spent?

Nope. And I don't want to know. A lot.

Then, in 2006, Proof was killed. Can you talk a bit about what he meant to you?

[Sighs] The best way to describe Proof would be a rock. Somebody to confide in, somebody who always had your back. At this point, it's difficult to find people I know I can trust. I still have certain friends like that, but when you lose one, man... [trails off] It hit me pretty hard.

How much do you think his death had to do with your spiral?

It had a lot to do with it. I remember days I spent just taking fucking pills and crying. One day, I couldn't get out of bed. I didn't even want to get up to use the bath-

room. I wasn't the only person grieving – he left a wife and kids. But I was very much in my own grief. I was so high at his funeral. It disgusts me to say it, but I felt like it was about me. I hate myself for even thinking that. It was selfish.

What was happening to you physically?

I got up to between 220 and 230, about 80 pounds heavier than I am now. I was going to McDonald's and Taco Bell every day. The kids behind the counter knew me – it wouldn't even faze them. Or I'd sit up at Denny's or Big Boy and just eat by myself. It was sad. I got so heavy that people started to not recognize me. I remember being somewhere and overhearing these kids talking. One of them said, "That's Eminem," and the other said, "No it's not, man – Eminem ain't fat." I was like, "Motherfucker." That's when I knew I was getting heavy.

It creeps me out sometimes to think of the person I was. I was a terrible person. I was mean to people. I treated people around me shitty. Obviously I was hiding something. I was fucked up inside, and people with those kinds of problems tend to put up this false bravado – let me attack everyone else, so the focus is off me. But of course everybody knew. There were whispers, murmurs.

Did anyone ever say to you, "Em, you need help"?

They'd say it behind my back. They didn't say it to my face, because I would fucking flip out. If I even sniffed the scent of somebody thinking they knew what I was doing, they were out of here. You'd never see them again.

And it peaked in December of 2007, when you were rushed to the hospital after overdosing on methadone. Can you walk me through that night?

I can try. There are certain parts I have to leave out because they have to do with my kids. But I remember I got the methadone from somebody I'd gone to looking for Vicodin. This person said, "These are just like Vicodin, and they're easier on your liver." I thought, "It looks like Vicodin, it's shaped like Vicodin – fuck it." I remember taking one in the car on the way home, and thinking, "Oh, this is great." Just that rush. I went through them in a couple of days, then went back and got more. But I got a lot more.

My whole month of December leading up to [the overdose], I don't remember shit. All I remember is I was not able to get out of bed. At some point – I don't know if it was the middle of the day, I don't know if it was nighttime – I got up to use the bathroom. I was standing there, trying to take a piss, and I fell. I hit the floor hard. I got back up, tried again – and boom, I fell again. And that time I couldn't get up.

I've never really talked about it with anyone in detail, because I don't want to know. They say I made it back to the bed somehow. I don't remember that. All I remember was hitting the bathroom floor and waking up in the hospital.

What happened when you woke up?

The first thing I remember is trying to move, and I couldn't. It's like I was paralyzed – tubes in me and shit. I couldn't speak. The doctors told me I'd done the equivalent of four bags of heroin. They said I was about two hours from dying.

I think I'd been out for two days, and when I woke up, I didn't realize it was Christmas. So the first thing I wanted to do was call my kids. I wanted to get home, and show them that Dad's OK.

So you missed Christmas morning? That must have been hard.



FAMILY TIES

Baby Marshall with his great-aunt Edna. He visited her often before she died this year.

Definitely. Being a father, wanting to be there with your kids. It's not a fun thing to deal with.

And they didn't come visit? You didn't get to see them at all?

No. [Long pause] I was in the hospital.

What happened next?

I checked myself out – I think I had been there a week – but I went home too soon. I wasn't fully detoxed. It had zapped all my strength – I couldn't lift the fucking salt-and-pepper shaker. I remember lying on the couch, falling asleep for literally 10 minutes, and when I woke up, my knee was out of place. I'd somehow torn my meniscus. I'm just coming off Vicodin, my senses are coming back, and it's hurting 10 million times worse than it had to. I had surgery a couple of days later, came home... and had a seizure. Because I wasn't detoxed. Boom, ambulance, right back to the hospital.

I knew I had to change my life. But addiction is a fucking tricky thing. I think I relapsed within... three weeks? And

within a month it had ramped right back to where it was before. That's what really freaked me out. That's when I knew: I either get help, or I am going to die.

As a father, I want to be here for things. I don't want to miss anything else.

How did you get clean? Did you go to meetings?

I tried some meetings – a couple of churches and things. It tended to not do me much good. People tried to be cool, but I got asked for autographs a couple of times. It made me shut down. Instead, I called a rehab counselor who'd helped me the first time. Now I see him once a week.

I also started running like a fucking maniac. Seventeen miles a day, every day. Just replacing one addiction with another. I had days where I could hardly walk. In my mind I was trying to get down to – what's his name, in *The Machinist*? Christian Bale. Which was really fucking stupid. But I'd get a number of calories in my head I needed to burn, and no matter what, I would do it.

I have a slight bit of OCD, I think. I'm not walking around flipping light switches. But when I say I'm going to do something, I have to do it.

Who else do you talk to?

I speak to Elton [John]. He's like my sponsor. He usually calls me once a week to check on me, just to make sure I'm on the up-and-up. He was actually one of the first people I called when I wanted to get clean. He was hippping me to things, like, "You're going to see nature that you never noticed before." Shit you'd normally think was corny but that you haven't seen in so long that you just go, "Wow! Look at that fucking rainbow!" Or even little things – trees, the color of leaves. I fucking love leaves now, man. I feel like I've been neglecting leaves for a long time.

Are you ever tempted to use again?

Honestly, no. For one thing, I try not to be in a position where I could be tempted. I've performed in a few clubs where there is drinking and shit, but I think even if I'd never had a drug problem, at the age I'm at, I wouldn't want to [use] anyway. I feel like this is the time in your life where you stop doing that stuff. Time to grow up.

What's your sober date?

4/20. Ironically.

Let's talk about rapping some. Do you remember your first rhyme?

Shit, I think I do. I was at my great-aunt Edna's house in St. Joseph, Missouri. I was 12, maybe 13 at the most, and I wrote a rhyme that sounded exactly like LL Cool J. Something like, "...da da da da, 'cause before you can blink/I'll have a hundred million rhymes and like a ship you will sink!" [Laughs]

Not bad!

I was proud of it. And I didn't think it sounded like LL at all. In my head, it was me [laughs]. It's weird, man. There's certain little landmarks in your life that you just don't forget. I remember walking back and forth between my little room there and the kitchen, just like I do today. I even remember the kind of paper I wrote it on. It was small, like from a notepad, and beige. And it had blue writing at the top.

And you still write on a notepad now - no laptop, no BlackBerry...

I've seen a lot of rappers stack their ideas in BlackBerries, but it wouldn't work for me. I'd have to, you know - scroll, scroll, scroll. If it's on the pad, I can look at everything at once.

Do you still write in the bathroom?

Sometimes. I think we do most of our best thinking on the shitter. What else do you have to do in there besides think?

How do you go about putting together a verse?

Even as a kid, I always wanted the most words to rhyme. Say I saw a word like "transcendalistic tendencies." I would write it out on a piece of paper - *trans-cend-a-lis-tic ten-den-cies* - and underneath, I'd line a word up with each syllable: *and bend all mystic sentence trees*. Even if it didn't make sense, that's the kind of drill I would do to practice. To this day, I still want as many words as possible in a sentence to rhyme.

Can you give another example? Maybe write a few bars about this interview?

About this interview? How much money you got? [Laughs] I can spit a hot 16 real quick!

I don't think I can afford you.

Yeah, probably not [laughs]. Let me think about it.

[At our meeting the next day, Eminem flips open his notebook to a page near the back. "I wrote it right after you left," he says. "Just some dumb shit." I ask to read it, and he says he'd rather rap it. It goes like this:

*This dude doin' this interview
wants me to spin a few*

*Lyrics while I tie my fuckin' tennis
shoes in the nude*

*A romantic interlude in a livin'
room*

*In an inner tube with a dude
with a bit of tube*

*Fuck that, I'm sniffin' glue, sip-
pin' gin and juice*

*And a little bit of paint thinner
with my dinner too*

*You better pay me for my bars
like your rent is due*

*Now hurry up and finish, dude,
before I finish you*

Every line rhymes with the word "interview" - some twice, and one even three times. I ask him how long it took to write. "About two minutes," he says.]

Where do you think you get your love of words from? Are you a big reader?

The only book I ever read from front to back was LL's [1998 autobiography *I Make My Own Rules*]. I just never really got into books. My great-aunt Edna, she would read to me sometimes, like *The Little Engine That Could*. And I was into comic books heavy. But as far as book-books? Nah. I think it's just listening, being a sponge. I suck at math. I'm terrible at social studies. But I've always been good at English, and I always had a lot of words in my vocabulary. Even now, I might not know what a word means, but if I hear you say it and it's an interesting word, I'll go look it up.

What's a typical day like for Marshall Mathers these days?

I'll get up around 7:30 or 8:00 and work out. I was working with a boxing trainer for a while, but now I just run, bike, hit the heavy bag. I eat breakfast - low-fat waffles with sugar-free syrup and a Red Bull - and then just get to the studio as early as I can,

"I HAVE TRUST ISSUES. WITH WOMEN, WITH FRIENDS. You wonder what people's real motives are."

try to put in a full day's work so I can get home early enough to see the kids.

And in the evenings?

I watch a lot of TV. *The First 48* - that show is incredible. *South Park*. *Tosh.O* is a funny dude. *Intervention*, *Celebrity Rehab* - those are good because I can relate to what they're going through. And sports - the NFL Channel and SportsCenter are on in my house 24/7. Football is my main shit - I like the Lions and the Cowboys. And I play fantasy football with some friends. I'm in third place right now, out of eight or nine teams. Not bad.

Who do you hang out with?

I've got a few close friends. The guys in D12. Royce Da 5'9". 50 [Cent] is one of my good friends - there's an extra bedroom in the house that he'll stay in when he comes to town. But for the most part they just come hang here [at the studio]. Basically I work five days a week, and then weekends and as many evenings as I can with the kids.

In your song "Going Through Changes," you talk about living "like a recluse." Do you feel disconnected from the world sometimes?

Well, that song is about my addiction, and my mind frame at the time. I don't

feel like a recluse now. I do go out and do things - it's just hard. You've got to take an entourage. It's a pain in the ass. When I didn't have a record out for four or five years, I was taking little trips down to see my great-aunt Edna, before she passed. I knew it was getting close - she was in her 90s - and I wanted to spend as much time with her as I could. Not having a record out, I could stop at a gas station, go places and not get recognized. That was actually a pretty good feeling.

It might sound weird, given that I'm always trying to get people's attention with my music, but I'm not an attention-seeker. When I'm not Eminem, and I'm just Marshall - it's hard.

What about your love life? Do you date?

Not really. As far as going out, like dinner and a movie - I just can't. Going out in public is just too crazy. I mean, I'd like to be in a relationship again someday. Who doesn't? It's just hard to meet new people, in my position.

You mean being famous?

No, I mean being gay [laughs]. Kidding.

I wonder how much your problems with your mom and ex-wife have to do with it. Do you think it's hard for you to trust women?

I have trust issues. With women, friends, whatever. You always wonder what their real motives are. I've got a small circle of friends, and it's a lot of the same friends I've known forever. Right now, that works for me.

I came out of some difficult things these past couple of years. I kind of feel like I'm just now finding my footing. So I want to make sure that's secure before I go out and do anything else. I need to keep working on myself for a while.

Has your dad ever tried to get in touch with you?

No. Well... I heard there was one instance. He had a baby book of mine, and he wanted to give it back. He was around until I was about six months old, so I guess he had pictures from then. But I didn't even know what my father looked like until I was 18 or 19, and my mother showed me a picture. I remember being a little kid, coloring in front of the TV at my aunt and uncle's house, and he would call on the phone. I would say, "Was that my dad?" And my aunt would change the subject. He *had* to know I was there. But I never even got so much as a "Brucie, your dad says hi."

Did that hurt?

I don't know if it hurt back then. But the older you get, you start to realize, "Fuck. I would never do that to my kids." You start getting a chip on your shoulder, getting bitter. At this point - look, I'm a grown man. I'm not gonna sit here and bicker about it. But at the end of the day, it's fucked up.

And now you have kids. What does being a good father mean to you?

EMINEM

Just being there. Not missing things. If there's anything important going on, regardless of what it is, I'm there. Helping them with homework when you can. At the grades my older ones are in, it's hard [laughs]. I never even passed ninth grade. They're already way smarter than me.

Why do you think you've never left Detroit?

A lot of it might have to do with moving around so much as a kid, never having stability. My kids are comfortable here – I want them to have the stability I didn't. And it's also nostalgic. Being a few miles from where I grew up, being used to the people, the mentality. I'm a creature of habit. I know one way to get downtown. I still get lost driving places and shit.

You've made your comeback. Where do you go from here?

If you'd asked me 10 years ago, I would have said I'd probably quit rapping by 30. Now I think I'll keep doing it as long as I have the spark. But I do worry about when the time comes that I need to do something else. Because it's going to be hard. What else do I know? Hip-hop is the only thing I was ever good at. What am I going to do?

More acting? Maybe go back to school?

Well, I did go back and get my GED. I don't know if that counts, but I'm proud of it.

I've never really had a plan. When I was younger, I just wanted to be a rapper. If I didn't make it, I had no plan B. Now that I am a rapper, I don't know. I'd like to refocus on rebuilding our label. Maybe doing a little producing. Other than that, I'm not sure.

Do you think about aging? In your song "Without Me" – the one where you called Moby a fag and told him to blow you – you also said he was "too old" and to "let go, it's over." He was 36 at the time. You're about to turn 38.

At the time that I wrote that, it seemed so far away. I do feel like I've grown up a lot. There's always going to be that part of me that reverts back to immaturity, but I think that's just my warped sense of humor.

"Not Afraid" has a positive message for people trying to overcome obstacles. Are you more comfortable now with the idea of being a role model?

Whatever I can be to people is fine. Some people may look up to me. Some people may consider me a fucking menace. But I'm grateful for every fan letter I get, and for every person who says I helped save them.

I don't know, man. I feel like I took a lot of time off. Not doing shit for those four or five years, how lazy I got – it's time to get back to doing what I love. I feel like I've got a lot of gas in the tank. I just want to make up for letting people down. ②

CLOSE-UP

The Simple Life of Chad Ochocinco

UNLESS YOU LIVE IN A JOYLESS VACUUM, YOU KNOW THAT Cincinnati Bengals wide receiver Chad Johnson's last name isn't Johnson anymore – he changed it a few years back to his jersey number, 85, or Ochocinco, to appeal to his Latin fans. "I'm the world's only black Mexican," he says while barreling his jet-black Mercury Marauder through the streets of Cincinnati. Despite playing on an underachieving team, Ochocinco, 32, remains one of the NFL's most dynamic freak shows. He's a persistent, heavily fined burr in commissioner Roger Goodell's saddle, and is as likely to make SportsCenter with his balletic catches as his absurd touchdown celebrations (a rendition of Riverdance; a marriage proposal to a cheerleader), but he's not a petulant megalomaniac like Randy Moss. He's a loud, likable, narcissistic, moody, electric, multiplatform entertainer. He's been on *Dancing With the Stars*. He's got one talk show – *The T.Ocho Show*, with teammate and fellow diva Terrell Owens – and just finished the first season of his reality series, *Ochocinco: The Ultimate Catch* (where 85 women competed for his affections). He even has a breakfast cereal called Ochocinco's. Unfortunately, when the cereal first hit the shelves, the phone number on the box for one of Ocho's charities, Feed the Children, was accidentally replaced by the number for a phone-sex line. "Awe man I'm bummed about the number mixup on the cereal!!!" Ocho tweeted. "Trying to do good and got messed up, of all numbers why that one! Sorry."

He really does mean to do the right thing, but because he's Ochocinco, every misstep gets amplified. Still, he soldiers on, priding himself on two things: his speed (he once outran a thoroughbred horse in a race), and that he never gets into any serious trouble. "I stole candy when I was nine and I got caught, and I still remember the ass-whooping my grandma gave me for that shit," Ocho says. "But as far as real trouble with the law, man? Never. And where I grew up in Miami, you'd expect me to go down the wrong path. My friends were the dudes that sold the drugs, they were the killers. But them motherfuckers made sure I stayed away from all that. I played sports, and I was good."

Ocho lives his entire life in public – on the field, in front of reality-show cameras and on Twitter. He tweets throughout the day, to nearly 1.4 million followers. If he goes out to lunch, he tweets where. Last season, when he was in Pittsburgh, he tweeted, "I'm walking in the mall. First person that comes up and identifies me I'll buy them anything they want (within reason)."

"I tell Chad to be careful and not tell people where he's going all the time," says Bengals coach and father figure Marvin Lewis. "He feels like the whole world is good. He's very naive to the dangers out there."

Ocho even tweets as he drives (he also doesn't wear a seat belt): "Twitter is me taking control of my life. When ESPN says some shit about me, I can respond. It changes everything. My life is just like everybody else's," he says, pulling up to his modest home in the lily-white Cincinnati suburb of Mount Adams. "That's why I live here, man! I'm trying to get that superstar, elite-athlete stigma off me. I do it to show everybody that I'm just like you." MIKE GUY



BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS
Chad Ochocinco in his off-season home outside Miami



PHIL COLLINS' LAST STAND

**WHY THE TROUBLED POP STAR WANTS
TO CALL IT QUILTS. BY ERIK HEDEGAARD**

IN A REHEARSAL HALL SOMEWHERE IN SWITZERLAND, Phil Collins is belting out some tunes in front of an 18-piece band, getting ready to go on a small tour to support a new album. He looks happy, snapping his fingers, bopping his head. It's all Motown – upbeat stuff like “Dancing in the Street,” “Going to a Go-Go” and “Heat Wave.” He’s not playing the drums, and not a song of his own passes his lips. There’s no “In the Air Tonight,” no

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTIA ZOPPELLARO

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Collins with his collection of weapons from the Alamo at his home in Switzerland

"Sussudio," no "One More Night," nothing from his Genesis days – none of the hits that turned him into one of the most loved and then most unfairly and inexplicably vilified men in rock & roll.

Later on, halfway through lunch in a mixing room, he happily rolls a great big gherkin around his plate and begins sawing into it with a knife and fork. He's 59 and looks pretty much the way he's always looked: kind of small, kind of bald. He's wearing a green polo shirt, the collar popped. As a solo artist, he has sold 150 million records, which puts him right up there with the all-time greats. He's saying that his new album, *Going Back*, which features only classic-soul songs, is his "best album ever," that he couldn't resist making it because it's the music he grew up with, and that it may be his last album ever, too. Medically, he's got a few serious and life-altering problems: The hearing in his left ear is shot, and a dislocated vertebra in his neck has rendered him all but unable to pound on the drums that first made him famous. But those aren't the reasons why.

Mainly, it's because he's had it with people thinking they know who Phil Collins is. And not in a good way. He has been called "the Antichrist," the sellout who took Peter Gabriel's Genesis, that paragon of prog-rock, and turned it into a lame-o pop act and went on to make all those supercheesy hits that really did define the 1980s. So, he wants to move on. He could make another original album, but he knows that will bring a rehashing of all the old criticism. It's inescapable. Forget it. He'd rather spend his time in his basement, building up his collection of Alamo memorabilia, which, oddly enough, is his great consuming passion these days. "I sometimes think, 'I'm going to write this Phil Collins character out of the story,'" he says. "Phil Collins will just disappear or be murdered in some hotel bedroom, and people will say, 'What happened to Phil?' And the answer will be, 'He got murdered, but, yeah, anyway, let's carry on.' That kind of thing."

He is already taking steps. When he started dating his girlfriend, Dana Tyler, a TV newscaster from New York, he said to her, "I'm tired of being Phil Collins. You can call me Philip." So that's who he is to her, Philip, anyone but Phil, and that's who he'd like to be to the rest of the world, too. Like he says, in his mind, the guy known as Phil Collins would be better off dead.

WHO PEOPLE THINK PHIL Collins is derives mainly from how absolutely everywhere he was in the 1980s. It's almost impossible to overstate. He released four solo albums during the decade and had 13 hit singles. As Genesis' lead singer and songwriter after Peter Gabriel

Contributing editor ERIK HEDEGAARD profiled Chelsea Handler in RS 1113.



Look at Me Now

Collins quit a promising acting career to pursue music. (1) With fellow young actors in London in 1968 (at right). (2) Dressed as his hero, Davy Crockett, in the Fifties. (3) Performing with Genesis at Madison Square Garden in 1977.



quit, he was largely responsible for that band's output too, which reached a high point in 1986, with *Invisible Touch* and its five hit singles. Of all his songs, "In the Air Tonight" was particularly ubiquitous, propelled forward by Collins' towering drum entrance. It became the unofficial theme song for the Eighties drugs-guns-and-glamour cop show *Miami Vice*; and was used to hawk Michelob beer; and was prominently featured in *Risky Business* 26 years before Mike Tyson air-drummed new life into the song in *The Hangover*. And then there was Collins himself. His face was plastered over all his albums, close up, looking placid and somewhat smugly self-serious. He tried his hand at acting (the 1988 movie *Buster*, an episode of *Miami Vice*). He came to be known as Mr. Nice Guy. He did lots of charity work. (Later on, he went so far as to pay for well-known-substance-abuser David Crosby's liver transplant.)

But then a curious thing happened. The Eighties ended and the Nineties began in a whole different mood, with Nirvana and other punk-influenced bands establishing grunge as the dominant musical force. In many ways, grunge's threadbare, garage-rock sound was a direct reaction to the overblown, synth-heavy bombast of the previous decade – and no one typified those excesses more than Collins. In the summer of 1994, reports began circulating that Collins had informed his (second) wife that he wanted a divorce – via fax. He denied it vehemently, and the fax itself was never produced, but no matter: Suddenly, it was open season on the guy. Oasis' Noel Gallagher started hammering on him any time he could, to uproarious effect. Among his choicest bons mots: "You don't have to be great to be successful. Look at Phil Collins" and "People hate fucking cunts like Phil Collins, and if they don't, they fucking should." And so it's gone, especially on the

Internet, where I Hate Phil Collins sites have flourished. He gets criticized for everything. For his hair, for his height, for his pants (pleated khakis), for his shirts (tucks them in), for being "a shameless, smirking show hog."

"I don't understand it," he says, looking pained. "I've become a target for no apparent reason. I only make the records once; it's the radio that plays them all the time. I mean, the Antichrist? But it's too late. The die is cast as to what I am."

So now he lives in a small Swiss town near Lake Geneva – not in any kind of self-imposed exile, he says, but because his third wife (now his third ex-wife) lived there, and that's where they are raising their two young boys, ages five and seven. His neighborhood is quiet, his chalet-type house is modest, and he can often be seen ferrying his kids to school in his Range Rover. He's got a pair of old wooden skis mounted over the inside entrance to his place, and the pictures on the walls are all of family and friends. He keeps the rock & roll stuff – the Grammys and various awards – in his basement home studio, not too far from the vast expanse of his beloved Alamo collection, which he thinks is one of the largest in the world.

goes on, "The Alamo thing has been all-consuming. I mean, I don't come down here and gloat at it all. I come down and look at it all in amazement." As it happens, Collins is liked by Alamo buffs and has been invited to speak at a meeting of Alamo descendants. "They said, 'We're such big fans!' And it's like, 'Wow, they know I exist! I can't believe this is happening! I'm just a fucking pop star!'" He goes on, "You know how in some cultures they say if you take a picture of someone, you take a little bit of their soul? I often think that down here, at night or during the day, something might go on."

One thing that's clearly going on is that the person speaking like this, with such bubbly enthusiasm, seems to be less Phil, probably, and more Philip, or maybe even somebody else entirely. At another Alamo gathering, he says, a clairvoyant approached him and said, "You were here before. You were John W. Smith, the courier." Phil might have scoffed, but Philip thinks it's possible. That receipt he has of Smith's – it was the first scrap of Alamo history Collins ever bought. "That little bit of paper," he says. "That's incredible."

And then there are the photographs. He's got them stored on a laptop upstairs.

Finally, he goes back to talking about what the clairvoyant had told him: "I don't want to sound like a weirdo. I'm not Shirley MacLaine. But I'm prepared to believe. You've seen the pictures. You can't deny them, so therefore it is a possibility that I was here in another life." And he says lots more about this, too, all of which proves he's not the bland dude everyone thinks he is. He's got a lot of multidimensional fringe in him, and once he gets going on the Alamo, he seems thrilled to be talking about anything and anyone but himself.

BORN IN A LONDON SUBURB, COLLINS first saw TV's Davy Crockett, as played by the late great Fess Parker, when he was five and was so smitten by the show's vision of battlefield heroics and self-sacrifice that he soon proudly sported his own coonskin cap. He took up drums the same year; became a professional child actor at age 14; was in a West End production of *Oliver!*; was a screaming-teenager extra in the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night*; disappointed his dad, a London civil servant, by dropping out of acting to become a musician; played in a few small bands; answered a newspaper ad for a drummer in 1970; joined

"I'M GOING TO WRITE THIS PHIL COLLINS CHARACTER OUT OF THE STORY. WHEN I SAY I'M STOPPING AND I DON'T CARE ABOUT ALL THIS, I'M SERIOUS. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF BEING ME."

He is down there now, picking up relics and explaining what they are and their significance. He moves softly in the room, which is spotless in the manner of a well-funded museum. Aligned in glass cases, mounted on the walls, secreted away in drawers and stacked in corners are muskets and rifles, Sam Houston's Bowie knife ("Just look at that!"), a signed copy of Davy Crockett's autobiography, a Davy Crockett military-service receipt, a howitzer, pistols, gunpowder pouches, a whole mess of horseshoes, Jim Bowie's visa allowing him to reside in Mexico, swords, musket balls, animal teeth, human teeth, maps, cannonballs, brass powder flasks, a painting of Fess Parker as Davy Crockett, a poster of John Wayne as Davy Crockett, a receipt for a saddle bought by John W. Smith, a courier who happened to be out on a run on the day of the fall of the Alamo and went on to become the first mayor of San Antonio.

Collins' delight in all this seems total. "Just look at that overcoat pocket pistol! Just feel that! This is the Bowie knife I was talking about! And this was supposed to be Bowie's boot knife! Look at that! Want a horseshoe? Here, take a horseshoe!" He

He has a ton of them, taken by him and some of his Alamo buddies. They're odd. They've got unworldly things in them. "Do you want to see them?" he says. And then adds with mock fright in his voice, "It's some absolutely chilling stuff." But then he goes upstairs, pets his Jack Russell terrier, Travis (named after William Barret Travis, the Alamo commander), and sits at a laptop, where he pulls up picture after picture of the modern-day Alamo and related battle sites, various angles and times, and in the majority of them, soft little glowing balls, whitish in color and semitransparent, sometimes a few, sometimes a great many, seem to be hovering in the air.

"They're orbs," Collins says solemnly. "I'm not sure what the scientific term is, but it's paranormal energy. See this one? Now this one is at Goliad, where, after the Alamo, 400 guys were executed. You've got to be careful. You can talk yourself into this stuff. See how many there are here? I get chills just talking about it. All of those orbs! They're all over the place! If you believe this, then you have to rethink everything you've been taught. That's what freaks me out."

Genesis; was 19 years old; got married; had a son, adopted a daughter; became Genesis' frontman in 1976; turned it from an arty prog-rock band into a pop-song machine; was too busy to see wife or kids; was left by wife who had started affair with family's interior decorator; released pain and suffering into first solo album; didn't think much of the pivotal drum bit in "In the Air Tonight," even after his friend Eric Clapton listened to a demo version and said, "What the hell, man? What the fuck is that?" while pinned to the wall, blown away by the sound; got married again, had another kid; got divorced again; began transformation into alleged Antichrist; had his music satirized in Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*, in both the book and the movie (Collins' take: "It was funny. I'd watch it again"); got married again, had kids again, got divorced again; has been kept relevant by vocal admiration from the R&B and rapper crowd: Ice-T, Akon, Bone Thugs-n-Harmony and Lil' Kim, despite growing I Hate Phil Collins sentiment ("His stuff seemed deep to me, like it makes you look into your own self," says Ice-T. "Noel Gallagher [Cont. on 91]




YOU TALKIN' TO ME?
Springsteen in 1978. "I'm an
alienated person by nature.
I'm always trying to overcome
my reticence and alienation."

© ERIC MEOLA

'Darkness' Revisited

As he reissues his stark 1978 masterpiece, Bruce Springsteen opens up on family, fame and the road not taken By Brian Hiatt



THE TITLES CAME TO HIM FIRST. THEY WERE EVOCATIVE, bold, full of B-movie swagger: "Racing in the Street," "Badlands," "Streets of Fire." The hard part was writing songs that could live up to their promise – but Bruce Springsteen was 27 years old, and he had plenty of time. Even as a legal clash with his former manager barred him from the studio for months, Springsteen stayed up all night in his rented farmhouse just off a Jersey highway, writing song after song, draft after draft: Should the guy in "Racing in the Street" drive a '32 Ford or a '69 Chevy? Should the girl in "Candy's Room" have "pictures of her heroes" on her wall or "pictures of her saviors"? "I didn't have any problem spending hours and hours in pursuit of what I was after," he says now.

The ultimate result, to be reissued this month in a lavish six-disc box set, was *Darkness on the Edge of Town* – a lean, stark album that produced some of his most enduring live tunes, and established the themes that would shape much of his subsequent work.

Springsteen had just gone from cult hero to anointed rock savior with *Born to Run*'s tales of romance, redemption and getting the hell out of New Jersey – but when he got off tour in 1976, he took the Garden State Parkway back to the only home he knew. Thirty-four years later, he's still there. "I was looking for a haven," Springsteen says, perched on a wooden stool by a crackling fireplace in a modest guesthouse on the edge of his vast, verdant property in Colts Neck – five miles south of his *Darkness*-era farmhouse in Holmdel. "It was something I knew – I was provincial by nature. When we came back, we sort of hunkered back down, which, in retrospect, was not such a bad thing."

In Jersey, Springsteen couldn't get away from his past – a theme that spilled over to his lyrics: If *Born to Run* offered fantasies of escape, Springsteen's characters on *Darkness* sought the strength to stand their ground. "I was looking toward the connection with where I'd grown up and where I'd come from," he says. "I was frightened of losing that because of my circumstances." A lyric from "The Promise," one of the best songs Springsteen wrote for *Darkness*, hints at his thoughts: The narrator wins a big race, "but . . . inside I felt like I was carryin' the broken spirits/Of all the other ones who lost."

He began to confront hard truths in his lyrics – from America's class system to the bitterness that can pass for love between fathers and sons. His relationship with his dad – a bus driver and factory worker who didn't support his son's early musical ambitions – had already fueled years of tragicomic stage raps ("There were two things that were unpopular in my house: one was me, and the other was my guitar"). It became the core of two of *Darkness*' most personal songs, "Factory" and "Adam Raised a Cain."

Springsteen cut "The Promise" from the album – feeling it was too "self-referential" – but the studio version is finally coming out in the new box set, along with

20 other lost songs and alternate versions, from the hand-clapping frat rock of "Ain't Good Enough for You" to the sweeping Sixties pop of "Someday (We'll Be Together)." As detailed in the documentary *The Promise: The Making of "Darkness on the Edge of Town,"* Springsteen wrote dozens of songs in an endless procession of styles before he found the core of the album. "I hadn't formulated the record conceptually," he says. "I found that out as I went along and began to choose and shape. To see what I didn't want to do, I had to do it. I had to make the albums I didn't want to put out."

You say in the documentary that, more than rich, more than famous, more than happy, you wanted to be great. But were

my heels, and I always feel it back there. I've accepted that as just my nature, and it's given me the ability to write a "Rosali-ta" or "The Rising" or "Waitin' on a Sunny Day" or "Nebraska" or "Straight Time" or "The Ghost of Tom Joad." You can't write those without having had at least a taste of the abyss. It's allowed me to have an emotional breadth and subject matter in my work that is very wide, but then you also have to live with it [laughs].

Was it music 24/7 for you at that point in your life?

I was extremely intellectually curious and constantly exposing myself to books and new things. I started to do a lot of reading. I did study a lot, just for pleasure. But at that age, my life was 100 percent music, and I had a very distort-



THE TIES THAT BIND

Clarence Clemons, Roy Bittan, Springsteen and Steve Van Zandt (from left), New Jersey, 1978

you anywhere near happy while you were working on "Darkness"?

No [laughs]. So I didn't have to worry about that part.

You were on a vampire schedule while you were writing the record, sleeping until 4 p.m. – that kind of isolated state doesn't sound healthy.

I'm an alienated person by nature, always have been, still am to this day. It continues to be an issue in my life, in that I'm always coming from the outside, I'm always operating in distance, and I'm always trying to overcome my own internal reticence and alienation – which is funny, because I throw myself the opposite way onstage. But the reason I do that is because while the stage and all those people are out there, the abyss is under

ed relationship with it. It was my one shot at redemption – redemption from what? I couldn't tell you. A thousand things. But it was my life preserver. At the time, working and playing made me happy, but the thing that was the most difficult was that I was very drifty. I didn't have a place, I never felt at home, even when I *was* home. I had no inner sense of home. The closest I could get to it was the band and playing. Whenever I wasn't doing those things, I was spiritually and emotionally wandering, really adrift. I couldn't get my feet on anything solid.

You were 26 years old – you'd escaped school, 9-to-5 jobs, all of that. And here you were facing guys in suits and ties, having to give depositions in a lawsuit

Senior writer BRIAN HIATT wrote the Roger Waters cover story in RS 1114.

against your manager. How did that affect you emotionally?

It was so bad, emotionally. You were totally caught in the system of all those things, and as a musician, particularly when you're young, you're off the grid, you're out of sight, out of mind. I didn't pay a penny of income tax until I was on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*. Some guy must have seen me and said, "Who is that? Whoever that guy is, he hasn't paid any income tax," and neither had anybody else in the band, so we all got stuck. The collision of our world with "the real world," the business world, is a big, big, defining moment. You realize, "I'm going to have to negotiate these places, and all of my tools are useless. Everything I've learned, everything I know, everything I'm good at is useless in this world. And this world scares me a lot." I'm 22 when I'm signing all my agreements, and I'm 26 when I'm going through this thing, and I'm by myself. My parents had moved to California. They were 3,000 miles away, and they're living their own life. I had friends, but it was

all the way to Woody Guthrie and country music and up through the Animals. It was thematically influenced by punk music and the times. It was 1977, so there were tough times. . . .

Like now. It was another time that people felt their kids weren't going to have it as good as they did.

Absolutely. The lights were going out on the Christmas tree at the White House [by '79], right? "No Christmas lights this year!" [Laughs] So you were living in a time where there was going to be no Christmas.

"No Christmas" – that's the alternate title for the record.

That should have been it [laughs].

How did you start writing about your father on "Factory" and "Adam Raised a Cain"?

I don't know if kids care as much about their parents as people as they should until they're in their late 20s, at best. They're furniture until then, and as a parent, you want to be a sturdy piece of furniture if you can. I was beginning to real-

presented it. Those songs were ways that I spoke to my father at the time, because he didn't speak and we didn't talk very much. I think if you weren't really close with someone, particularly children, the way they become close with that person is you take on their personality, you take on an imitation. The subjects I was drawn to, the issues I was moved to investigate, the clothes I wore, wear . . . when I went to work, I really went to work in my dad's clothes, and it became a way, I suppose, that I honored him and my parents' lives, and a part of my own young life. And then it just became who I was.

As you moved into the "Darkness" material, your lead guitar stepped forward in a way that I'm not sure it has before or since. What was it about your second voice through that lead guitar that resonated for you at that point?

I originally made my living as a guitarist for many, many years. I wasn't known as a singer, I wasn't known as a songwriter, I was basically known as a frontman, and primarily a guitar player, the first

"I never felt at home, even when I was home. The closest I could get to it was the band and playing."

very, very frustrating. It was quite frightening at the time.

The outtakes from "Darkness" are soul- and Sixties-pop-influenced. How did you get from there all the way to the sound of "Darkness"?

I didn't want to be pegged as a revivalist, so I was hesitant to wear my influences too clearly on my sleeve at the moment. If you listen to the two CDs we put out, the influences are all over, there's soul, there's Brill Building, there's all kinds of things, and it's extremely melodic, the arrangements are changing keys and moving. In that way, it really slid out of *Born to Run*. But on *Born to Run*, I had a theme that tied it together, and this material slips more into something like we did on *The River*: "OK, that would be a great song to play in a bar, this is a great neo-soul song." But I wasn't trying to be a neo-soul singer, or neo-anything. I said, "No, I'm trying to find a voice, a voice that's singular and feels of this moment," and when I began to move toward the *Darkness* material, which is not super-melodic, it really begins our folk-based rock, going back to blues and folk structures. I was not trying to be really melodic, because that immediately pulls you into the pop world. I was trying to create this mixture, this sort of rock-folk music that stretches back

ize a part of me was going to keep a leg in my history, and that my history was tied to my parents' experience, and my experience growing up. That was a mystery to me, and I was very interested in beginning to investigate that mystery. Suddenly I recognized there was a life lived here when I was a child – there were several lives lived here. Those lives impacted my life tremendously, and yet I've also had the unusual experience of escaping the tethers of the hardest of their circumstances. That gave me a position to reflect and observe from. All artists are psychologically and emotionally driven to tell their stories. I'm not so sure we choose the stories – they choose you. We don't ever completely understand the things that drive us, but I do believe that a good deal of the thrust of the direction of the choices I made, when I had a choice about where my life was going to go, was back in deep pursuit of the mysteries of the past in order to find out "Who am I, who am I going to be, where's my future?"

You were still very young – how much distance did you have from that adolescent conflict with your dad?

I had a good distance from it at the time, but I'd also say I generalized that relationship. Our actual relationship was probably more complicated than how I

eight or nine years of my life here on the Jersey Shore. I was the Man [laughs]. I got very, very good at it, and it was where I thought that my fortunes would lie at one point. But then when I hit my early 20s, I started to say, "Really, I want to summon up a world," and songwriters do that. There was a select group of guitarists that do it, and those are the very, very, very rare exceptions – Hendrix or the Edge, you can pick them out – that manifest a world with their guitar.

So I knew I was very good, but I didn't know if I was *that* good: "Do I have a vision with my guitar?" That's what I was interested in, and I said, in the end, "Well, I don't think so." I said, "Man, I can play the shit out of this thing, but I don't know if I have that." I got signed in the pack of new Dylans – Elliott Murphy, Loudon Wainwright, John Prine. Billy Joel a year later. But I could turn around, kick-start my Telecaster and burn the house down. It was my ace in the hole.

But if I want to call up a world, that's songwriting, for me. If you're Frank Sinatra or Elvis, you can call it up with your voice. If you're not, you'd better think of something else. I felt I'd been gifted with a very, very high-octane journeyman's capabilities. I felt if I put those things together really thoughtfully and with enormous



PROVE IT ALL NIGHT

Springsteen and Bittan onstage at Detroit's Masonic Auditorium, September 1978.

will and vitality, I can turn all of that into something that transcends what I felt were my modest abilities. The center of it was songwriting, so I delved into that with everything I had.

The guitar on *Darkness* came around because the music had moved to a somewhat less urban area, and I said, "There will probably be less saxophone, that makes room for a little more guitar-playing." The sax is warm and melodic, the way we've used it, and we use it very orchestrally. If I wanted something that was just going to be nasty and burn, that's the guitar. For that group of material, I wanted the aggression, I wanted the harshness of the guitar, and I got a chance to play.

Until Brendan O'Brien came along on *"The Rising,"* the rhythm guitars never got that loud on your records.

This would be Steve's [Van Zandt] ax to grind if he was here. It was just a choice. We had a huge keyboard presence. When Roy [Bittan] entered on *Born to Run*, I wrote all those *Born to Run* songs on the piano, but Roy, in the end, his attack and formulations of what I showed him really created a very, very unique sound, and if people hear that today, they go, "That sounds like the E Street Band." So that became very, very powerful. Usually, when something like that happens, the first thing I do is I move away from it, because then you're just sounding like yourself [laughs].

But in the film in the box set of you guys playing "Darkness" at the Paramount Theater in Asbury Park last year, the guitars are louder than ever.

The band is a more aggressive band today than it was when we were in our 20s. We were still little boys, you know,

in truth. If you go back and you watch old footage of us – and we're playing the stuff great on the DVD, stuff from Phoenix – then you move up to the performance from last year, it's better, it's just better. We're a band that has never lost their focus from when we hit the stage, so now you have this collection of years, which we gather instead of try to deny, you have the power of the oncoming train that's chasing you now, right at your back, you can hear that whistle blowing, my friend [laughs], so it's now or never. We've doubled down on now or never, which we did in the beginning anyway. Bob Clearmountain mixed the new performance and did a great job. I said, "You've got to turn the guitars up," and he mixed it once. I went back and said, "Mix it again and turn all the guitars up," and that's what he did.

You get a great sense of your friendship with Steve Van Zandt in that documentary. We've heard you sing about it on "Bobby Jean" – "We liked the same music, we liked the same bands, we liked the same clothes" – but what was the nature of your bond?

Just music, it was just about music. We're each other's best audience – everything he did I thought was funny. Steve's incredibly smart. He was the other guy who came out of this area, as far as I know – with very little education – who's simply very, very smart in many ways. Your friendships, often, you're driven toward that intelligence, and your minds are going [buzzing noise] together. He felt about music the way I felt about it: "This is actually the only shit that matters, and don't let anybody tell you different." There's a moment in your life when you say, "There's this, or we die, my friend." And so there was another guy in the area who understood that, it's not this, or seeing my girlfriend on Friday night – no, it's this or nothing. That extremism was very valuable at its time, and continues to be invaluable today, as long as it's tempered so you can have a life. But we've corralled that energy in a way, and we used it well, and we still use it well. We do no half measures. When it's on, it's all on. That hasn't changed – these guys are hitting 60, and that hasn't changed. Steve and I, I walked in and looked at him for the first time and he looked at me, and it was one of those moments of "I know you."

There's a lot of romantic calamity going on in the unreleased songs. Was it a genre exercise or autobiographical?

It was a genre exercise. A lot of it was just trying to write a clever lyric, because I liked how the idea of the Brill Building was "OK, we're going to write a breakup song, or the girl, she won't talk to the guy. You can't satisfy her. Go!" I was having an enormous amount of fun with the toolbox of rock & roll, all the things that were already sort of in there. I'd write something to hear Clarence [Clemons] play the sax,

and if you write well enough, what you end up with has nothing to do with whatever its initial spark was.

There's a reproduction of your song notebooks included in the box. When you look in the notebooks and you see the title "Badlands" and a bunch of not-so-great lyrics that don't end up in the final song – did you know that all these lousy drafts would eventually lead to a classic song?

I never said, "Maybe I'm going to write a classic." I said, "Maybe I'm going to write something I can stand to sing and have other human beings hear." I wanted to write something that just doesn't embarrass me. I was sort of praying for that. Of course, at the same time, there's some part of you where you want to be great and you want to make records that have the same impact as the records that enriched your life so deeply: "Oh, man, if I could only deliver that, I could live with myself for another day or two." They sort of went ahead and put a semblance of the notebook out with this package. I didn't

realize that's what they were doing, and in the past, I would never have allowed it, because I would have been too embarrassed, because there's a lot of bad writing and bad verses of purple prose. But it was what I was drawing from . . . B movies . . . there was a certain kind of teenage poetry, I guess.

Brian Wilson.

Yeah, and films, those were my influences, and I would just write down anything, and then I would come back later and I would edit. "OK, I can't sing that, but maybe I could sing a version of that here, I could sing the first half of that." When you pick a song title like "Racing in the Street," that's a hard song to write. But that was sort of the local culture of Asbury in the Seventies, which was still deeply enmeshed in car culture. If you went to the Stone Pony, it was a constant circle of souped-up muscle cars on Saturday and Sunday. Once again, I sort of stood outside of it, I was hitchhiking, I didn't have a car! But I wanted one real bad.

So I came up with titles, and I went in search of songs that would deserve the title. "Badlands," that's a great title, but it would be easy to blow it. But I kept writing and I kept writing and I kept writing and writing until I had a song that I felt deserved that title. Same with "Darkness on the Edge of Town," I had that title and said, "Well, I'd better come up with something that deserves that title." That's what I was always very, very good at – I didn't have any problem thinking really hard about what I was doing. Any other pressing questions?

Was Candy a hooker, or what?

Does it matter, does it really matter? [Laughs] I'll never tell.

Do you know what you're doing next?

I'm walking five minutes right over that way today, and I pick up that guitar in about 10 minutes. Do I know what I'm doing? No, that's the point! [Laughs] That's what we just got done discussing – no, I don't know what I'm doing, I'm smelling something in the air and I'm trying to find out what that is. 22

BOX SET REVIEW

The Brighter Side of "Darkness"

Bruce Springsteen ★★★★★

The Promise: The "Darkness on the Edge of Town" Story Columbia

In his introductory essay to this extraordinary set, Bruce Springsteen estimates that he wrote, rehearsed and recorded four albums' worth of material to get to the straight talk and gritty ecstasies in the 10 songs that finally appeared on 1978's *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. The opening track on these two CDs – 21 first-class refugees from those sessions, including rewrites and discarded gems – shows why it had to be that way.

"Racing in the Street ('78)" has everything that made Springsteen a star three years earlier: hot rods, a girl who is the stuff of dreams and Phil Spector bar-band might. In the second chorus, over the slow muscle-car roll of the E Street Band, Springsteen belts that paraphrase from Martha and the Vandellas – "Now summer's here and the time is right/For racing in the street" – like a Righteous Brother with the world by the steering wheel. But it is the wrong majesty for a song about hollow triumph and diminished expectation. In the *Darkness* version, Springsteen sings in a wounded growl, dogged by the sound of his bravado ticking away – the incessant snare-rim tap of Max Weinberg's drumstick. It is the difference between telling a story with every gift you've got – and telling it right.

That is a young man's lesson. Springsteen was only 27 when he started recording *Darkness*. You hear him reeling from, then building on, the shock of wisdom when you compare "Come On (Let's Go Tonight)" on *The Promise* – a ballad about finding sweet relief from the daily grind – to the song it became on *Darkness*, "Factory." The melody is the same, but Springsteen's new lyrics and severe vocal emphasize the toil and toll, including the price his own father paid to support the family.

Springsteen also took drastic measures on the way to the *Darkness* bullet "Candy's Room." The prototype here,

"Candy's Boy," is a sweet-and-sad boardwalk stroll, like an overcast "4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" sung by a kid resigned to play second fiddle to his girlfriend's sugar daddies. Springsteen kept the *femme fatale* but gave the kid more spunk and cranked the E Street Band to drag-strip velocity. It was the smart call. Still, it is fascinating to hear him pursue different stories in the same set of sheets, with equal and thorough passion.

In that sense, *The Promise* is not a collection of outtakes. This is fully realized work. The magnificent R&B pleading of "The Brokenhearted" and Springsteen's original readings of "Because the Night," "Fire" and "Rendezvous" (given away to Patti Smith, Robert Gordon and Greg Kihn, respectively) could have been the guts of a great power-soul and pop-romance album – the kind of record Springsteen has, in fact, been making lately. It was also the kind of thrill that, in 1978, came too easy for him.

"The Promise" is the best example here of how far he still had to go, to get to the hard truths and redemption in "Badlands" and "The Promised Land." The great lost beauty of these sessions, "The Promise" is a slow reckoning of bad luck and dead ends. "Every day just gets harder to live," Springsteen groans, "this dream I'm believin' in." But then he wheels back to old glory: "Thunder Road/Baby, you were so right/Thunder Road/There's someone dyin' down on the highway tonight." It's like a half-step forward: the looming shadows of *Darkness*, still set on Jersey asphalt. It is also great Springsteen and finally out on the right album – a record of promises about to come true. DAVID FRICKE





INVASION *of the* HOME SNATCHERS

How the courts are helping bankers screw over homeowners and get away with fraud

By MATT TAIBBI

THE FORECLOSURE LAWYERS DOWN IN JACKSONVILLE had warned me, but I was skeptical. They told me the state of Florida had created a special super-high-speed housing court with a specific mandate to rubber-stamp the legally dicey foreclosures by corporate mortgage pushers like Deutsche Bank and JP Morgan Chase.

This “rocket docket,” as it is called in town, is presided over by retired judges who seem to have no clue about the insanely complex financial instruments they are ruling on – securitized mortgages and labyrinthine derivative deals of a type that didn’t even exist when most

of them were active members of the bench. Their stated mission isn’t to decide right and wrong, but to clear cases and blast human beings out of their homes with ultimate velocity. They certainly have no incentive to penetrate the profound criminal mysteries of the great American mortgage bubble of the 2000s, perhaps the most complex Ponzi scheme in human history – an epic mountain range of corporate fraud in which Wall Street megabanks conspired first to collect huge numbers of subprime mortgages, then to unload them on unsuspecting third parties like pensions, trade unions and insurance companies (and, ultimately, you and me, as taxpayers) in

the guise of AAA-rated investments. Selling lead as gold, shit as Chanel No. 5, was the essence of the booming international fraud scheme that created most all of these now-failing home mortgages.

The rocket docket wasn’t created to investigate any of that. It exists to launder the crime and bury the evidence by speeding thousands of fraudulent and predatory loans to the ends of their life cycles, so that the houses attached to them can be sold again with clean paperwork. The judges, in fact, openly admit that their primary mission is not justice but speed. One Jacksonville judge, the Honorable A.C. Soud, even told a local newspaper that his goal is

to resolve 25 cases *per hour*. Given the way the system is rigged, that means His Honor could well be throwing one ass on the street every 2.4 minutes.

Foreclosure lawyers told me one other thing about the rocket docket. The hearings, they said, aren’t exactly public. “The judges might give you a hard time about watching,” one lawyer warned. “They’re not exactly anxious for people to know about this stuff.” Inwardly, I laughed at this – it sounded like typical activist paranoia. The notion that a judge would try to prevent any citizen, much less a member of the media, from watching an open civil hearing sounded ridiculous. Fucked-up as everyone knows the state of Florida is, it couldn’t be that bad. It isn’t Indonesia. Right?

Well, not quite. When I went to sit in on Judge Soud’s courtroom in downtown Jacksonville, I was treated to an intimate, and at times breathtaking, education in the horror of the foreclosure crisis, which is rapidly emerging as the even scarier sequel to the financial meltdown of 2008: *Invasion of the Home Snatchers II*. In Las Vegas, one in 25 homes is now in foreclosure. In Fort Myers, Florida, one in 35. In September, lenders nationwide took over a record 102,134 properties; that same month, more than a third of all home sales

were distressed properties. All told, some 820,000 Americans have already lost their homes this year, and another 1 million currently face foreclosure.

Throughout the mounting catastrophe, however, many Americans have been slow to comprehend the true nature of the mortgage disaster. They seemed to have grasped just two things about the crisis: One, a lot of people are getting their houses foreclosed on. Two, some of the banks doing the foreclosing seem to have misplaced their paperwork.

For most people, the former bit about homeowners not paying their damn bills is the important part, while the latter, about the sudden and strange inability of the world's biggest and wealthiest banks to keep proper records, is incidental. Just a little office sloppiness, and who cares? Those deadbeat homeowners still owe the money, right? "They had it coming to them," is how a bartender at the Jacksonville airport put it to me.

But in reality, it's the unpaid bills that are incidental and the lost paperwork that matters. It turns out that underneath that little iceberg tip of exposed evidence lies a fraud so gigantic that it literally cannot be contemplated by our leaders, for fear of admitting that our entire financial system is corrupted to its core – with our great banks and even our government coffers backed not by real wealth but by vast landfills of deceptively generated and essentially worthless mortgage-backed assets.

You've heard of Too Big to Fail – the foreclosure crisis is Too Big for Fraud. Think of the Bernie Madoff scam, only replicated tens of thousands of times over, infecting every corner of the financial universe. The underlying crime is so pervasive, we simply can't admit to it – and so we are working feverishly to rubber-stamp the problem away, in sordid little backrooms in cities like Jacksonville, behind doors that shouldn't be, but often are, closed.

And that's just the economic side of the story. The moral angle to the foreclosure crisis – and, of course, in capitalism we're not supposed to be concerned with the moral stuff, but let's mention it anyway – shows a culture that is slowly giving in to a futuristic nightmare ideology of computerized greed and unchecked financial violence. The monster in the foreclosure crisis has no face and no brain. The mortgages that are being foreclosed upon have no real owners. The lawyers bringing the cases to evict the humans have no real cli-

ents. It is complete and absolute legal and economic chaos. No single limb of this vast man-eating thing knows what the other is doing, which makes it nearly impossible to combat – and scary as hell to watch.

What follows is an account of a single hour of Judge A.C. Soud's rocket docket in Jacksonville. Like everything else related to the modern economy, these foreclosure hearings are conducted in what is essentially a foreign language, heavy on jargon and impenetrable to the casual observer. It took days of interviews with experts before and after this hearing to make sense of this single hour of courtroom drama. And though the permutations of small-

with a specific mandate to clear 62 percent of the foreclosure cases that were clogging up the system. Rather than forcing active judges to hear thousands of individual cases, this strategy relies on retired judges who take turns churning through dozens of cases every morning, with little time to pay much attention to the particulars.

What passes for a foreclosure court in Jacksonville is actually a small conference room at the end of a hall on the fifth floor of the drab brick Duval County Courthouse. The space would just about fit a fridge and a pingpong table. At the head of a modest conference table this morning sits Judge Soud, a small and fussy-looking man who reminds me vaguely of the actor Ben Gazzara.

On one side of the table sits James Kowalski, a former homicide prosecutor who is now defending homeowners. A stern man with a shaved head and a laconic manner of speaking, Kowalski has helped pioneer a whole new approach to the housing mess, slowing down the mindless eviction machine by depositing the scores of "robo-signers" being hired by the banks to sign phony foreclosure affidavits by the thousands. For his work on behalf of the dispossessed, Kowalski was recently profiled in a preposterous *Wall Street Journal* article that blamed attorneys like him for causing the foreclosure mess with their nuisance defense claims. The headline: NICHE LAWYERS SPAWNED HOUSING FRACAS.

On the other side of the table are the plaintiff's attorneys, the guys who represent the banks. On this level of the game, these lawyers refer to themselves as "bench warmers" – volume stand-ins subcontracted by the big, hired-killer law firms that work for the banks. One of the bench warmers present today is Mark Kessler, who works for a number of lenders and giant "foreclosure mills," including the one run by David J. Stern, a gazillionaire attorney and all-Universe asshole who last year tried to foreclose on 70,382 homeowners. Which is a nice way to make a living, considering that Stern and his wife, Jeanine, have bought nearly \$60 million in property for themselves in recent years, including a 9,273-square-foot manse in Fort Lauderdale that is part of a Ritz-Carlton complex.

Kessler is a harried, middle-aged man in glasses who spends the morning perpetually fighting to organize a towering stack of folders, each one representing a soon-to-be-homeless human being. It quickly becomes apparent that Kessler is barely ac-



"UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT"

Judge A.C. Soud (top), who presides over foreclosure cases in Florida, threatened legal-aid lawyer April Charney (below) with contempt for bringing a reporter to his courtroom.

time scammy and gift in the foreclosure world are virtually endless – your average foreclosure case involves homeowners or investors being screwed at least five or six creative ways – a single hour of court and a few cases is enough to tell the main story. Because if you see one of these scams, you see them all.

IT'S EARLY ON A SUNNY TUESDAY morning when I arrive at the chambers of Judge Soud, one of four rotating judges who preside over the local rocket docket. These special foreclosure courts were established in July of this year, after the state of Florida budgeted \$9.6 million to create a new court

quainted with the names in the files, much less the details of each case. "A lot of these guys won't even get the folders until right before the hearing," says Kowalski.

When I arrive, Judge Soud and the lawyers are already arguing a foreclosure case; at a break in the action, I slip into the chamber with a legal-aid attorney who's accompanying me and sit down. The judge eyes me anxiously, then proceeds. He clears his throat, and then it's ready, set, *fraud!*

Judge Soud seems to have no clue that the files he is processing at a breakneck pace are stuffed with fraudulent claims and outright lies. "We have not encountered any fraud yet," he recently told a local newspaper. "If we encountered fraud, it would go to [the state attorney], I can tell you that." But the very first case I see in his court is riddled with fraud.

Kowalski has seen hundreds of cases like the one he's presenting this morning. It started back in 2006, when he went to Pennsylvania to conduct what he thought would be a routine deposition of an official at the lending giant GMAC. What he

drag in these pimply entry-level types – an infamous example is GMAC's notorious robo-signer Jeffrey Stephan, who appears online looking like an age-advanced photo of Beavis or Butt-Head – and get them to sign thousands of documents a month attesting to the banks' proper ownership of the mortgages.

This isn't some rare goof-up by a low-level cubicle slave: Virtually every case of foreclosure in this country involves some form of screwed-up paperwork. "I would say it's pretty close to 100 percent," says Kowalski. An attorney for Jacksonville Area Legal Aid tells me that out of the hundreds of cases she has handled, fewer than five involved no phony paperwork. "The fraud is the norm," she says.

Kowalski's current case before Judge Soud is a perfect example. The Jacksonville couple he represents are being sued for delinquent payments, but the case against them has already been dismissed once before. The first time around, the plaintiff, Bank of New York Mellon, wrote in Paragraph 8 that "plaintiff owns and holds the note" on the house belonging to the couple.

words, is trying to push through a completely new set of documents in its attempts to foreclose on Kowalski's clients.

There's only one problem: The dates of the transfers are completely fucked. According to the documents, JP Morgan transferred the mortgage to Bank of New York on December 9th, 2008. But according to the same documents, JP Morgan didn't even receive the mortgage from Novastar until February 2nd, 2009 – two months *after* it had supposedly passed the note along to Bank of New York. Such rank incompetence at doctoring legal paperwork is typical of foreclosure actions, where the fraud is laid out in ink in ways that make it impossible for anyone but an overburdened, half-asleep judge to miss. "That's my point about all of this," Kowalski tells me later. "If you're going to lie to me, at least lie well."

The dates aren't the only thing screwy about the new documents submitted by Bank of New York. Having failed in its earlier attempt to claim that it actually had the mortgage note, the bank now tries an all-of-the-above tactic. "Plaintiff owns and

THE JUDGE SEEMS TO HAVE no clue that the foreclosure files he is processing at a breakneck pace are stuffed with fraudulent claims and outright lies.

discovered was that the official – who had sworn to having personal knowledge of the case – was, in fact, just a "robo-signer" who had signed off on the file without knowing anything about the actual homeowner or his payment history. (Kowalski's clients, like most of the homeowners he represents, were actually making their payments on time; in this particular case, a check had been mistakenly refused by GMAC.) Following the evidence, Kowalski discovered what has turned out to be a systemwide collapse of the process for documenting mortgages in this country.

If you're foreclosing on somebody's house, you are required by law to have a collection of paperwork showing the journey of that mortgage note from the moment of issuance to the present. You should see the originating lender (a firm like Countrywide) selling the loan to the next entity in the chain (perhaps Goldman Sachs) to the next (maybe JP Morgan), with the actual note being transferred each time. But in fact, almost no bank currently foreclosing on homeowners has a reliable record of who owns the loan; in some cases, they have even intentionally shredded the actual mortgage notes. That's where the robo-signers come in. To create the appearance of paperwork where none exists, the banks

But in Paragraph 3 of the same complaint, the bank reported that the note was "lost or destroyed," while in Paragraph 4 it attests that "plaintiff cannot reasonably obtain possession of the promissory note because its whereabouts cannot be determined."

The bank, in other words, tried to claim on paper, in court, that it both lost the note and had it, at the same time. Moreover, it claimed that it had included a copy of the note in the file, which it did – the only problem being that the note (a) was not properly endorsed, and (b) was payable not to Bank of New York but to someone else, a company called Novastar.

Now, months after its first pass at foreclosure was dismissed, the bank has refiled the case – and what do you know, it suddenly found the note. And this time, somehow, the note has the proper stamps. "There's a stamp that did not appear on the note that was originally filed," Kowalski tells the judge. (This business about the stamps is hilarious. "You can get them very cheap online," says Chip Parker, an attorney who defends homeowners in Jacksonville.)

The bank's new set of papers also traces ownership of the loan from the original lender, Novastar, to JP Morgan and then to Bank of New York. The bank, in other

holds the note," it claims, "or is a person entitled to enforce the note."

Soud sighs. For Kessler, the plaintiff's lawyer, to come before him with such sloppy documents and make this preposterous argument – that his client either is or is not the note-holder – well, that puts His Honor in a tough spot. The entire concept is a legal absurdity, and he can't sign off on it. With an expression of something very like regret, the judge tells Kessler, "I'm going to have to go ahead and accept [Kowalski's] argument."

Now, one might think that after a bank makes multiple attempts to push phony documents through a courtroom, a judge might be pissed off enough to simply rule against that plaintiff for good. As I witness in court all morning, the defense never gets more than one chance to screw up. But the banks get to keep filing their foreclosures over and over again, no matter how atrocious and deceitful their paperwork is.

Thus, when Soud tells Kessler that he's dismissing the case, he hastens to add: "Of course, I'm not going to dismiss with prejudice." With an emphasis on the words "of course."

Instead, Soud gives Kessler 25 days to come up with better paperwork. Kowalski fully expects the bank to come back

with new documents telling a whole new story of the note's ownership. "What they're going to do, I would predict, is produce a note and say Bank of New York is not the original note-holder, but merely the servicer," he says.

This is the dirty secret of the rocket docket: The whole system is set up to enable lenders to commit fraud over and over again, until they figure out a way to reduce the stink enough so some judge like Soud can sign off on the scam. "If the court finds for the defendant, the plaintiffs just refile," says Parker, the local attorney. "The only way for the caseload to get reduced is to give it to the plaintiff. The entire process is designed with that result in mind."

NOW ALL OF THIS – THE obviously cooked-up documents, the magically appearing stamp and the rest of it – may just seem like nothing more than sloppy paperwork. After all, what does it matter if the bank has lost a few forms or mixed up the dates? The homeowners still owe what they owe,

like Deutsche and Goldman and JP Morgan. The banks then dumped hundreds or thousands of home loans at a time into tax-exempt real estate trusts, where the loans were diced up into securities, examined and graded by the ratings agencies, and sold off to big pension funds and other institutional suckers.

Even at this stage of the game, the banks generally knew that the loans they were buying and reselling to investors were shady. A company called Clayton Holdings, which analyzed nearly 1 million loans being prepared for sale in 2006 and 2007 by 23 banks, found that nearly half of the mortgages failed to meet the underwriting standards being promised to investors. Citigroup, for instance, had 29 percent of its loans come up short, but it still sold a third of those mortgages to investors. Goldman Sachs had 19 percent of its mortgages flunk the test, yet it knowingly hawked 34 percent of the risky deals to investors.

D. Keith Johnson, the head of Clayton Holdings, was so alarmed by the findings that he went to officials at three of the main

grossly inflated appraisals to misrepresenting properties to home buyers. Most crucially, they gave tons and tons of credit to people who probably didn't deserve it, and why not? These fly-by-night mortgage companies weren't going to hold on to these loans, not even for 10 minutes. They were issuing this credit specifically to sell the loans off to the big banks right away, in furtherance of the larger scheme to dump fraudulent AAA-rated mortgage-backed securities on investors. If you had a pulse, they had a house to sell you.

As bad as Countrywide and all those lenders were, the banks that had sent them out to collect these crap loans were a hundred times worse. To sell the loans, the banks often dumped them into big tax-exempt buckets called REMICs, or Real Estate Mortgage Investment Conduits. Each one of these Enron-ish, offshore-like real estate trusts spelled out exactly what kinds of loans were supposed to be in the pool, when they were to be collected, and how they were to be managed. In order to both preserve their tax-exempt status and deserve their AAA ratings, each of the

THE MORTGAGE CRISIS REVEALS a fraud so vast it literally can't be contemplated: that our entire system is backed by subprime lead passed off as AAA gold.

and the deadbeats have no right to keep living in a house they haven't paid for.

But what's going on at the Jacksonville rocket docket, and in foreclosure courts all across the country, has nothing to do with sloppiness. All this phony paperwork was actually an essential part of the mortgage bubble, an integral element of what has enabled the nation's biggest lenders to pass off all that subprime lead as AAA gold.

In the old days, when you took out a mortgage, it was probably through a local bank or a credit union, and whoever gave you your loan held on to it for life. If you lost your job or got too sick to work and suddenly had trouble making your payments, you could call a human being and work things out. It was in the banker's interest, as well as yours, to make a modified payment schedule. From his point of view, it was better that you pay something than nothing at all.

But that all changed about a decade ago, thanks to the invention of new financial instruments that magically turned all these mortgages into high-grade investments. Now when you took out a mortgage, your original lender – which might well have been a big mortgage mill like Countrywide or New Century – immediately sold off your loan to big banks

ratings agencies – Moody's, Standard and Poor's, and Fitch's – and tried to get them to properly evaluate the loans. "Wouldn't this information be great for you to have as you assign risk levels?" he asked them. (Translation: Don't you ratings agencies want to know that half these loans are crap before you give them a thumbs-up?) But all three agencies rejected his advice, fearing they would lose business if they adopted tougher standards. In the end, the agencies gave large chunks of these mortgage-backed securities AAA ratings – which means "credit risk almost zero."

Since these mortgage-backed securities paid much higher returns than other AAA investments like treasury notes or corporate bonds, the banks had no trouble attracting investors, foreign and domestic, from pension funds to insurance companies to trade unions. The demand was so great, in fact, that they often sold mortgages they didn't even have yet, prompting big warehouse lenders like Countrywide and New Century to rush out into the world to find more warm bodies to lend to.

In their extreme haste to get thousands and thousands of mortgages they could resell to the banks, the lenders committed an astonishing variety of fraud, from falsifying income statements to making

loans in the pool had to have certain characteristics. The loans couldn't already be in default or foreclosure at the time they were sold to investors. If they were advertised as nice, safe, fixed-rate mortgages, they couldn't turn out to be high-interest junk loans. And, on the most basic level, the loans had to actually *exist*. In other words, if the trust stipulated that all the loans had to be collected by August 2005, the bank couldn't still be sticking in mortgage months later.

Yet that's exactly what the banks did. In one case handled by Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, a homeowner refinanced her house in 2005 but almost immediately got into trouble, going into default in December of that year. Yet somehow, this woman's loan was placed into a trust called Home Equity Loan Trust Series AE 2005-HE5 in January 2006 – five months after the deadline for that particular trust. The loan was not only late, it was already in foreclosure – which means that, by definition, whoever the investors were in AE 2005-HE5 were getting shafted.

Why does stuff like this matter? Because when the banks put these pools together, they were telling their investors that they were putting their money into tidy collections of real, performing home loans. But

frequently, the loans in the trust were complete shit. Or sometimes, the banks didn't even *have* all the loans they said they had. But the banks sold the securities based on these pools of mortgages as AAA-rated gold anyway.

In short, all of this was a scam – and that's why so many of these mortgages lack a true paper trail. Had these transfers been done legally, the actual mortgage note and detailed information about all of these transactions would have been passed from entity to entity each time the mortgage was sold. But in actual practice, the banks were often committing securities fraud (because many of the mortgages did not match the information in the prospectuses given to investors) and tax fraud (because the way the mortgages were collect-

good chance of beating the rap, at least temporarily, if only they had lawyers fighting for them in court. But most of them don't. In fact, more than 90 percent of the cases that go through Florida foreclosure courts are unopposed. Either homeowners don't know they can fight their foreclosures, or they simply can't afford an attorney. These unopposed cases are the ones the banks know they'll win – which is why they don't sweat it if they take the occasional whipping.

That's why all these colorful descriptions of cases where foreclosure lawyers like Kowalski score in court are really just that – a little color. The meat of the foreclosure crisis is the unopposed cases; that's where the banks make their money. They almost always win those cases, no matter

legal machinery. Watching Judge Soud plow through each foreclosure reminds me of the scene in *Fargo* where the villain played by Swedish character actor Peter Stormare pushes his victim's leg through a wood chipper with that trademark bored look on his face. Mechanized misery and brainless bureaucracy on the one hand, cash for the banks on the other.

What's sad is that most Americans who have an opinion about the foreclosure crisis don't give a shit about all the fraud involved. They don't care that these mortgages wouldn't have been available in the first place if the banks hadn't found a way to sell oregano as weed to pension funds and insurance companies. They don't care that the Countrywides of the world pushed borrowers who qualified for safer fixed-income loans into far more dangerous adjustable-rate loans, because their brokers got bigger commissions for doing so. They don't care that in the rush to produce loans, people were sold houses that turned out to have flood damage or worse, and they certainly don't care that people were sold houses with inflated appraisals, which left them almost immediately underwater once housing prices started falling.

The way the banks tell it, it doesn't matter if they defrauded homeowners and investors and taxpayers alike to get these loans. All that matters is that a bunch of deadbeats *aren't paying their fucking bills*. "If you didn't pay your mortgage, you shouldn't be in your house – period," is how Walter Todd, portfolio manager at Greenwood Capital Associates, puts it. "People are getting upset about something that's just procedural."

Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan, is even more succinct in dismissing the struggling homeowners that he and the other megabanks scammed before tossing out into the street. "We're not evicting people who deserve to stay in their house," Dimon says.

There are two things wrong with this argument. (Well, more than two, actually, but let's just stick to the two big ones.)

The first reason is: It simply isn't true. Many people who are being foreclosed on have actually paid their bills and followed all the instructions laid down by their banks. In some cases, a homeowner contacts the bank to say that he's having trouble paying his bill, and the bank offers him loan modification. But the bank tells him that in order to qualify for modification, he must first be delinquent on his mortgage. "They actually tell people to stop paying their bills for three months," says Parker.

The authorization gets recorded in what's known as the bank's "contact database," which records every phone call or other communication with a homeowner. But no mention of it is entered into the bank's "number history," which records



HOME IS WHERE THE FRAUD IS

A foreclosed home in Homestead, Florida. Banks have already seized some 820,000 homes across the country this year, and are trying to foreclose on a million more.

ed and serviced often violated the strict procedures governing such investments). Having unloaded this diseased cargo onto their unsuspecting customers, the banks had no incentive to waste money keeping "proper" documentation of all these dubious transactions.

"You've already committed fraud once," says April Charney, an attorney with Jacksonville Area Legal Aid. "What do you have to lose?"

SITTING IN THE ROCKET DOCKET, James Kowalski considers himself lucky to have won his first motion of the morning. To get the usually intractable Judge Soud to forestall a foreclosure is considered a real victory, and I later hear Kowalski getting props and attaboys from other foreclosure lawyers. In a great deal of these cases, in fact, the homeowners would have a pretty

what's in the files.

This becomes evident after Kowalski leaves the room.

"Who's next?" Judge Soud says. He turns to Mark Kessler, the counsel for the big foreclosure mills. "Mark, you still got some?"

"I've got about three more, Judge," says Kessler.

Kessler then drops three greenish-brown files in front of Judge Soud, who spends no more than a minute or two glancing through each one. Then he closes the files and puts an end to the process by putting his official stamp on each foreclosure with an authoritative finality:

Kerchunk!

Kerchunk!

Kerchunk!

Each one of those *kerchunks* means another family on the street. There are no faces involved here, just beat-the-clock

only the payment record. When the number history notes that the homeowner has missed three payments in a row, it has no way of knowing that the homeowner was given permission to stop making payments. "One computer generates a default letter," says Kowalski. "Another computer contacts the credit bureaus." At no time is there a human being looking at the entire picture.

Which means that homeowners can be foreclosed on for all sorts of faulty reasons: misplaced checks, address errors, you name it. This inability of one limb of the foreclosure beast to know what the other limb is doing is responsible for many of the horrific stories befalling homeowners across the country. Patti Parker, a local attorney in Jacksonville, tells of a woman whose home was seized by Deutsche Bank two days before Christmas. Months later, Deutsche came back and admitted that they had made a mistake: They had repossessed the wrong property. In another case that made headlines in Orlando, an agent for JP Morgan mistakenly broke into a woman's house that wasn't even in foreclosure and tried to change the locks. Terrified, the woman locked herself in her bathroom and called 911. But in a profound expression of the state's reflexive willingness to side with the bad guys, the police made no arrest in the case. Breaking and entering is not a crime, apparently, when it's authorized by a bank.

The second reason the whole *they still owe the fucking money* thing is bogus has to do with the changed incentives in the mortgage game. In many cases, banks like JP Morgan are merely the servicers of all these home loans, charged with collecting your money every month and paying every penny of it into the trust, which is the real owner of your mortgage. If you pay less than the whole amount, JP Morgan is now obligated to pay the trust the remainder out of its own pocket. When you fall behind, your bank falls behind, too. The only way it gets off the hook is if the house is foreclosed on and sold.

That's what this foreclosure crisis is all about: fleeing the scene of the crime. Add into the equation the fact that some of these big banks were simultaneously betting big money against these mortgages – Goldman Sachs being the prime example – and you can see that there were heavy incentives across the board to push anyone in trouble over the cliff.

Things used to be different. Asked what percentage of struggling homeowners she used to be able to save from foreclosure in the days before securitization, Charney is quick to answer. "Most of them," she

says. "I seldom came across a mortgage I couldn't work out."

In Judge Soud's court, I come across a shining example of this mindless rush to foreclosure when I meet Natasha Leonard, a single mother who bought a house in 2004 for \$97,500. Right after closing on the home, Leonard lost her job. But when she tried to get a modification on the loan, the bank's offer was not helpful. "They wanted me to pay \$1,000," she says. Which wasn't exactly the kind of modification she was hoping for, given that her original monthly payment was \$840.

"You're paying \$840, you ask for a break, and they ask you to pay \$1,000?" I ask.

"Right," she says.

Leonard now has a job and could make some kind of reduced payment. But instead of offering loan modification, the bank's lawyers are in their fourth year of doggedly beating her brains out over minor technicalities in the foreclosure

one point during Judge Soud's proceeding, a tallish blond woman named Shawnetta Cooper walks in with a confused look on her face. A recent divorcee delinquent in her payments, she has come to court today fully expecting to be foreclosed on by Wells Fargo. She sits down and takes a quick look around at the lawyers who are here to kick her out of her home. "The land has been in my family for four generations," she tells me later. "I don't want to be the one to lose it."

Judge Soud pipes up and inquires if there's a plaintiff lawyer present; someone has to lop off this woman's head so the court can move on to the next case. But then something unexpected happens: It turns out that Kessler is supposed to be foreclosing on her today, but he doesn't have her folder. The plaintiff, technically, has forgotten to show up to court.

Just minutes before, I had watched what happens when defendants don't show up in court: *kerchunk!* The judge more or less automatically rules for the plaintiffs when the homeowner is a no-show. But when the *plaintiff* doesn't show, the judge is suddenly all mercy and forgiveness. Soud simply continues Cooper's case, telling Kessler to get his shit together and come back for another whack at her in a few weeks. Having done this, he dismisses everyone.

Stunned, Cooper wanders out of the courtroom looking like a person who has stepped up to the gallows expecting to be hanged, but has instead been handed a fruit basket and a new set of golf clubs.

I follow her out of the court, hoping to ask her about her case. But the sight of a journalist getting up to talk to a defendant in

his kangaroo court clearly puts a charge into His Honor, and he immediately calls Cooper back into the conference room. Then, to the amazement of everyone present, he issues the following speech:

"This young man," he says, pointing at me, "is a reporter for *ROLLING STONE*. It is your privilege to talk to him if you want." He pauses. "It is also your privilege to *not* talk to him if you want."

I stare at the judge, open-mouthed. Here's a woman who still has to come back to this guy's court to find out if she can keep her home, and the judge's admonition suggests that she may run the risk of pissing him off if she talks to a reporter. Worse, about an hour later, April Charney, the lawyer who accompanied me to court, receives an e-mail from the judge actually threatening her with contempt for bringing a stranger to his court. Noting that "we ask that anyone other than a lawyer remain in the lobby," Judge Soud



KING OF PAIN

David J. Stern, who tried to foreclose on 70,000 homeowners last year, has bought \$60 million in property for himself.

process. That's fine by the lawyers, who are collecting big fees. And there appears to be no human being at the bank who's involved enough to issue a sane decision to end the costly battle. "If there was a real client on the other side, maybe they could work something out," says Charney, who is representing Leonard. In this lunatic bureaucratic jungle of securitized home loans issued by transnational behemoths, the borrower-lender relationship can only go one of two ways: full payment, or total war.

THE EXTREME RANDOMNESS of the system is exemplified by the last case I see in the rocket docket. While most foreclosures are unopposed, with homeowners not even bothering to show up in court to defend themselves, a few pro se defendants – people representing themselves – occasionally trickle in. At

admonishes Charney that "your unprofessional conduct and apparent authorization that the reporter could pursue a property owner immediately out of Chambers into the hallway for an interview, may very well be sited [sic] for possible contempt in the future."

Let's leave aside for a moment that Charney never said a word to me about speaking to Cooper. And let's overlook entirely the fact that the judge can't spell the word *cited*. The key here isn't this individual judge – it's the notion that these hearings are not and should not be entirely public. Quite clearly, foreclosure is meant to be neither seen nor heard.

After Soud's outburst, Cooper quietly leaves the court. Once out of sight of the judge, she shows me her file. It's not hard to find the fraud in the case. For starters, the assignment of mortgage is autographed by a notorious robo-signer – John Kennerty, who gave a deposition this summer admitting that he signed as many as 150 documents a day for Wells Fargo. In Cooper's case, the document with Kennerty's signature on it places the date on

house is owner-occupied – she doesn't even have a tenant, she tells me with a shrug. If Mark Kessler had had his shit together in court today, Cooper would not only be out on the street, she'd be paying for that attempt to serve papers to her non-existent tenant.

Cooper's case perfectly summarizes what the foreclosure crisis is all about. Her original loan was made by Wachovia, a bank that blew itself up in 2008 speculating in the mortgage market. It was then transferred to Wells Fargo, a megabank that was handed some \$50 billion in public assistance to help it acquire the corpse of Wachovia. And who else benefited from that \$50 billion in bailout money? Billionaire Warren Buffett and his Berkshire Hathaway fund, which happens to be a major shareholder in Wells Fargo. It was Buffett's vice chairman, Charles Munger, who recently told America that it should "thank God" that the government bailed out banks like the one he invests in, while people who have fallen on hard times – that is, homeowners like Shannetta Cooper – should "suck it in and cope."

even the average U.S. senator didn't know about it.

At worst, these ordinary homeowners were stupid or uninformed – while the banks that lent them the money are guilty of committing a bald-faced crime on a grand scale. These banks robbed investors and conned homeowners, blew themselves up chasing the fraud, then begged the taxpayers to bail them out. And bail them out we did: We ponied up billions to help Wells Fargo buy Wachovia, paid Bank of America to buy Merrill Lynch, and watched as the Fed opened up special facilities to buy up the assets in defective mortgage trusts at inflated prices. And after all that effort by the state to buy back these phony assets so the thieves could all stay in business and keep their bonuses, what did the banks do? They put their foot on the foreclosure gas pedal and stepped up the effort to kick people out of their homes as fast as possible, before the world caught on to how these loans were made in the first place.

Why don't the banks want us to see the paperwork on all these mortgages?

HOMEOWNERS WERE STUPID, but the banks that lent them the money robbed investors, blew up the economy and then begged taxpayers to bail them out.

which Wells Fargo obtained the mortgage as May 5th, 2010. The trouble is, the bank bought the loan from Wachovia – a bank that went out of business in 2008. All of which is interesting, because in her file, it states that Wells Fargo sued Cooper for foreclosure on February 22nd, 2010. In other words, the bank foreclosed on Cooper three months before it obtained her mortgage from a nonexistent company.

There are other types of gift and outright theft in the file. As is typical in many foreclosure cases, Cooper is being charged by the bank for numerous attempts to serve her with papers. But a booming industry has grown up around fraudulent process servers; companies will claim they made dozens of attempts to serve homeowners, when in fact they made just one or none at all. Who's going to check? The process servers cover up the crime using the same tactic as the lenders, saying they lost the original summons. From 2000 to 2006, there was a total of 1,031 "affidavits of lost summons" here in Duval County; in the past two years, by contrast, more than 4,000 have been filed.

Cooper's file contains a total of \$371 in fees for process service, including one charge of \$55 for an attempt to serve process on an "unknown tenant." But Cooper's

Look: It's undeniable that many of the people facing foreclosure bear some responsibility for the crisis. Some borrowed beyond their means. Some even borrowed knowing they would never be able to pay off their debt, either hoping to flip their houses right away or taking on mortgages with low initial teaser rates without bothering to think of the future. The culture of take-for-yourself-now, let-someone-else-pay-later wasn't completely restricted to Wall Street. It penetrated all the way down to the individual consumer, who in some cases was a knowing accomplice in the bubble mess.

But many of these homeowners are just ordinary Joes who had no idea what they were getting into. Some were pushed into dangerous loans when they qualified for safe ones. Others were told not to worry about future jumps in interest rates because they could just refinance down the road, or discovered that the value of their homes had been overinflated by brokers looking to pad their commissions. And that's not even accounting for the fact that most of this credit wouldn't have been available in the first place without the Ponzi-like bubble scheme cooked up by Wall Street, about which the average homeowner knew nothing – hell,

Because the documents represent a death sentence for them. According to the rules of the mortgage trusts, a lender like Bank of America, which controls all the Countrywide loans, is required by law to buy back from investors every faulty loan the crooks at Countrywide ever issued. Think about what that would do to Bank of America's bottom line the next time you wonder why they're trying so hard to rush these loans into someone else's hands.

When you meet people who are losing their homes in this foreclosure crisis, they almost all have the same look of deep shame and anguish. Nowhere else on the planet is it such a crime to be down on your luck, even if you were put there by some of the world's richest banks, which continue to rake in record profits purely because they got a big fat handout from the government. That's why one banker CEO after another keeps going on TV to explain that despite their own deceptive loans and fraudulent paperwork, the real problem is these deadbeat homeowners who won't pay their fucking bills. And that's why most people in this country are so ready to buy that explanation. Because in America, it's far more shameful to owe money than it is to steal it.

Bruce Springsteen The Promise

21 newly released recordings from the
Darkness on the Edge of Town sessions

"...the 21 unearthed songs, 'The Promise', are the motherlode.

They comprise what is unequivocally the great lost
Springsteen album...In a word, spectacular." - Uncut ★★★★★



Bruce Springsteen The Promise



"Darkness" was my "samurai" record, stripped to the frame and ready to rumble. During the year we spent recording, we made many albums. But... the music that got left behind was substantial.

Over the past summer in anticipation of this release, I went back to this music I'd abandoned thirty years ago. It was like revisiting old friends who'd been awaiting your return to close the circle on an important experience that somehow had gotten interrupted. All of these tracks are from the "Darkness" sessions of '77/'78. I culled my music to the toughest collection of songs I had, songs that still form the philosophical core of what we do today, swept the rest away and headed on.

I knew the stakes I wanted to play for, so I picked the hardest of what I had, music that would leave no room to be misunderstood about what I felt was at risk and what might be attained over the American airwaves of popular radio in 1978. Power, directness and austerity were my goals. Tough music for folks in tough circumstances. The original "Darkness on the Edge of Town" has done that for me and I hope it's done that for you as well. I owe the choices we made then and that young man their respect.

Still... a lot of sweet and important magic was momentarily lost, so to everything there is a season. Let me introduce you to some of my old friends, "The Promise: The Lost Sessions."

Bruce Springsteen, July 2010

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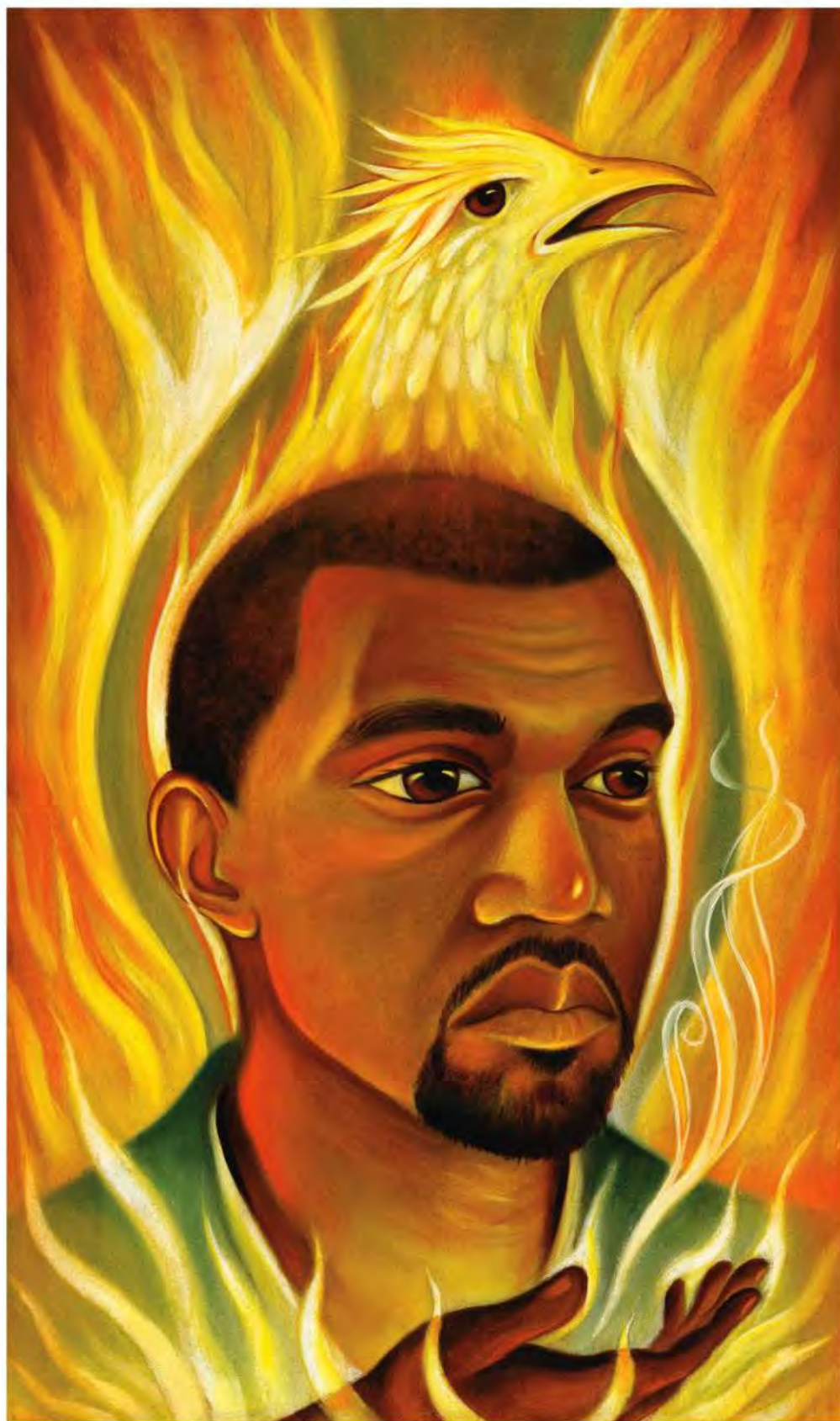
Also available **THE PROMISE: THE DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN STORY**
3 CD/3 DVD or 3 CD/3 Blu-Ray set with over 6 hours of never-before-seen video and an
80-page reproduction of Bruce's original notebooks from the recording sessions

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Reviews

NEW CDSPg. 76
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Kanye West
builds an
album as
epic as his
demons

Kanye West

★★★★★

My Beautiful Dark Twisted
Fantasy Island Def Jam

BY ROB SHEFFIELD



When Kanye West sings about "jerk-offs that'll never take work off," you'd best

believe he means himself. Being crazy is this guy's job, and judging from the sound of his music, business is booming. *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* is his most maniacally inspired music yet, coasting on heroic levels of dementia, pimping on top of Mount Olympus. Yeezy goes for the grandeur of stadium rock, the all-devouring sonics of hip-hop, the erotic gloss of disco, and he goes for *all* of it, all the time. Nobody halfway sane could have made this album.

Last time, Kanye went minimal for the electro melancholia of *808s & Heartbreak*. But on *Fantasy*, he gets ridiculously maximal, blowing past all the rules of hip-hop and pop, even though, for the past half-decade, he's been the one inventing the rules. There are hip-hop epics, R&B ballads, alien electronics, prog-rock samples, surprise guests from Bon Iver to Fergie to Chris Rock, even a freaking Elton John piano solo. It's his best album, but it's more than that – it's also a rock-star manifesto for a downsizing world. At a time when we all get hectored about lowering our expectations, surrendering our attention spans, settling for less, West wants us to demand *more*.

Nobody else is making music this daring and weird, from the spooky space funk of "Gorgeous" to the King Crimson-biting "Power" to the paranoid staccato strings of "Monster." Nearly six minutes into "Runaway," long after the song has already sealed itself in your brain, the sound cuts out and you think it's over. Then there's a plinking piano, the feedback of an electric guitar plugging in, some "Strawberry Fields"-style cellos and Yeezy himself singing a poignant Robert Fripp-style solo through his vocoder. There's no way it should work, but it keeps rolling for three more minutes without breaking the spell.

Coming off a string of much-publicized emotional meltdowns, Yeezy is taking a deeper look inside the dark corners of his twisted psyche. He has sex and romance on his mind, but he comes clean about his male angst like never before. In confessions like "Runaway" and "Blame Game," he honestly struggles to figure out why he has to be such a douchebag. Yet the songs are also his funniest ever, with Kanye showing off lethal wit on the mic: In "Dark Fantasy," he rhymes "mercy, mercy me, that Murcielago" with "diablo," "bravado" and "My chick in that new Phoebe Philo/So much head, I woke up in Sleepy Hollow."

There's a famous story about Queen making "Bohemian Rhapsody": Whenever the band thought the song was finished, Freddie Mercury would say, "I've added a few more 'Galileos' here, dear." But nobody can out-Galileo Kanye. With *Fantasy*, he makes everybody else on the radio sound laughably meek, but he's also throwing down a challenge to the audience. Kanye West thinks you're a moron if you settle for artists who don't push as hard as he does. And that means pretty much everybody.

Key Tracks: "Monster," "Runaway," "Dark Fantasy"



LISTEN NOW!

Hear key tracks from these albums at rollingstone.com/albums.

Kid Rock's Heartland Boogie

With Rick Rubin producing, Rock delivers a grown-up set of Seventies-style singalongs

Kid Rock ★★☆☆½

Born Free Atlantic

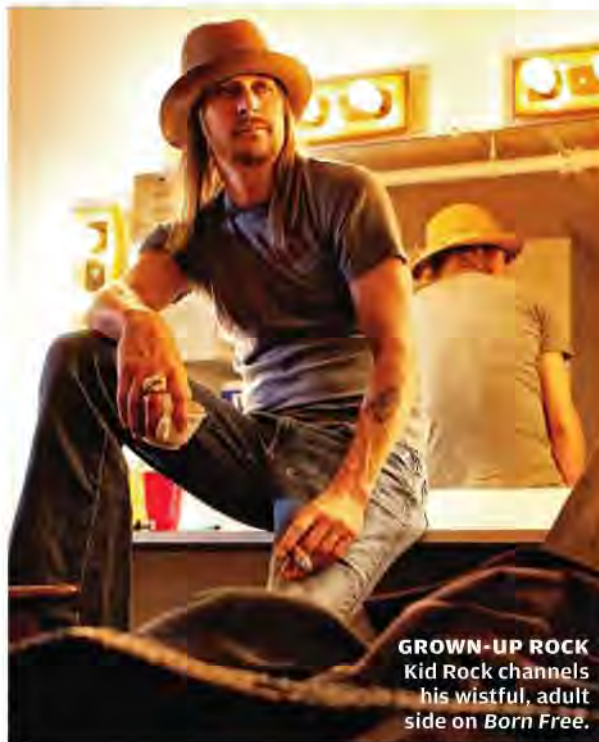


With his eighth album, Kid Rock has done something he's threatened to do for years: slipped fully into classic-rock mode. *Born Free* has the Skynyrd guitar attack, the Leon Russell-style gospel backup singers, some fire-down-below boogie from Rock's Detroit godfather, Bob Seger (who adds his blessing with the piano part on "Collide"). The trippy, pinwheeling guitars of the closing "For the First Time (In a Long Time)" even drift into - I kid you not - Grateful Dead territory.

It's a direction Rock has headed in since 2002's "Picture," the unexpected-smash duet with Sheryl Crow that became his career's pivot point. Guided by producer Rick Rubin, Rock harnesses his previously erratic songwriting into a cohesive package and reveals new range, emotionally and vocally. Guest stars (Crow, Zac Brown) are deployed flawlessly: Though pairing Martina McBride with T.I. on "Care" might seem ridiculous, the song's compassionate country soul feels nothing like a novelty. The familiar Kid Rock is still here, praising "foot-stompin' music and wine." But he sounds more earnest than ever on *Born Free*, and there's a very adult kind of wistfulness to songs like "When It Rains" and "Times Like These." *Born Free* shows that you just might be able to take the Kid out of the Rock.

ALAN LIGHT

Key Tracks: "Born Free," "Care," "When It Rains"



GROWN-UP ROCK
Kid Rock channels his wistful, adult side on *Born Free*.

Yelawolf ★★☆☆½

Trunk Muzik 0-60

Ghet-O-Vision/Interscope

Alabama MC parties hard, shows off his rural roots



Alabama's Michael Wayne Atha is a rap novelty - and not just because he's a white guy with a Flock of Seagulls haircut. He's a novelty in the best sense: an MC whose liquid flow breathes life into genre clichés. On his major-label debut, he raps from the POV of a rural underdog over music that shifts from rap rock to twitchy percussion. His verses are full of surprises: On "That's What We on Now," he rhymes "Bill Cosby sweater" with "Skinny Pimp, Petty and Eddie Vedder." And amid rants and party chants, there's an aching ballad, "Love Is Not Enough." Turns out, he's a sheep in wolf's clothing.

JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "That's What We on Now," "Box Chevy"

Robyn ★★★★★

Body Talk Cherrytree/Interscope

Straight from Sweden, the year's best dance-pop album



"Even the Vatican knows not to fuck with me," chirps Robyn on her third release of 2010. The Swedish diva's swagger is earned. This disc cherry-picks from two previous *Body Talk* EPs while tossing in five new tracks. It all adds up to the best dance-pop album of 2010, 15 songs that are both immaculately catchy and packed with quirks: On "Fembot," she does a hilarious sexy-robot bit, bragging about her "automatic booty applications"; later, she trades over-the-top boasts with Snoop Dogg and turns in the kind of Day-Glo dancehall track M.I.A. used to rock. Even her Eurocheese ballads are passionately weird: On "Time Machine," she folds a *Back to the Future* reference ("All I want is a DeLorean") into a huge, heartfelt chorus Lady Gaga would kill to have written.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

Key Tracks: "Dancing on My Own," "U Should Know Better," "Fembot"

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TOP SINGLES

Duffy ★★★

"Endlessly" *Leaked*

The Welsh singer carries a lover's torch on the title track from her second album, sighing sweetly over spare acoustic guitars and suggesting early-Sixties soul at its warmest. **BARRY WALTERS**

Kanye West and Jay-Z

★★★★½

"The Joy" *Leaked*

Our first taste of the Kanye-Jay collaboration album (due next year) celebrates some simple pleasures: a dusty Curtis Mayfield sample, a butter-dripping beat, and Jay waxing nostalgic about listening to his mama's shit when he was on his pajama shit. This isn't about conquering the world, just watching it spin. **JON DOLAN**

Weezer ★★★

"Unbreak My Heart"

All major services

From Weezer's new rarities collection, a cover of Toni Braxton's forlorn 1996 hit. In another band's hands, this might be a joke, but Rivers Cuomo moans the chorus like the words came straight from his diary. **CHRISTIAN HOARD**

Quincy Jones feat. T-Pain and Robin Thicke

★★★★ "P.Y.T. (Pretty Young Thing)" *iTunes*

This version of the Thriller killer, cut by its producer for his new album, finds T-Pain splashing on the Auto-Tune like cheap cologne while Thicke channels Michael more straightforwardly. This at least beats Justin Guarini's version from Season One of *Idol*. **WILL HERMES**



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Mathers and Minaj



Nicki and Eminem Blow Away the Haters

Nicki Minaj featuring Eminem ★★★★★½

"Roman's Revenge" *All major services*

It's a match made in battle-rap heaven! On this single from Minaj's upcoming debut, two motormouths—both of whom know their way around a punch line, love goofy voices and suffer from severe cases of multiple personality disorder—team up for nearly five minutes of back-and-forth word-hurling. They rhyme like they're playing hot potato with a live grenade, and Swizz Beatz's hushed, chugging production

throws the microphone viciousness into jarring relief. The common theme is anger toward female haters: Minaj tears into a "has-been" femcee who needs to "hang it up" (presumably Lil' Kim, with whom she's been beefing for months). Eminem, meanwhile, rails against a woman who may be a metaphor for life itself. It's hard to say exactly why he's so mad at her—but he threatens to pee on her. Twice. **JONAH WEINER**

Disco Nirvana for Goth Kids

Crystal Castles feat. Robert Smith ★★★★★

"Not in Love" *Leaked*

"Not in Love" was a generic arena-rock tune by big-haired Eighties band Platinum Blonde. But with the help of the Cure's frontman, Canadian synth duo Crystal Castles have transformed it into an awesomely gothic, vocoder-slathered dance-floor monster. Shunning love but singing with lust, Smith wails as the bass line rumbles and the keyboards go from spookily churchy to magnificently claustrophobic. This is Smith's catchiest, most immediately satisfying record since "Friday I'm in Love." **B.W.**

Colin Meloy Tightens Up

The Decemberists

★★★★½

"Down by the Water"

decemberists.com

Surprise! This isn't an 18-minute prog epic. Instead, it's a tight folk rocker from the Decemberists' forthcoming album, *The King Is Dead*. R.E.M.'s Peter Dinklage adds signature guitar chime, Gillian Welch contributes powerhouse backing vocals, and there's also a badass harmonica-accordion duel. It's not entirely clear what frontman Colin Meloy is going on about, but his imagery is evocative. About this "lash-flashing Leda of Pier 19," sir, we would like to hear more. **W.H.**

BOOTLEG

Phish

Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, October 31st

Three sets, four-plus hours of music: No one can say Phish were stingy at this year's Halloween spectacular. There are the signature long-winded work-outs (a sweet 16-minute "Divided Sky"), plus holiday-themed covers like the AM-radio hit "Spooky" by Classics IV. But the traditional Halloween main event is the second-set "musical costume," where the band covers a classic album. This year's choice: Little Feat's *Waiting for Columbus*, a perfect record for Phish. It's got tricky time signatures and jazzy riffing (after all, Little Feat began as an offshoot of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention). It's also got monster dance-party grooves



Anastasio

and drug references. And it's a live album itself. Guest Giovanni Hidalgo, the master Latin-jazz conga player, is key, adding push-and-pull to drummer Jon Fishman's Crescent City funk, and a horn section makes for a great sparring partner for guitarist Trey Anastasio. The arrangements are a bit wobbly, but the spirit is there. And these jokers sound like they'd been waiting their entire lives to do an a cappella barbershop version of "Don't Bogart That Joint." **W.H.**

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Jimi Hendrix's Deepest Cuts



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With four CDs of unreleased outtakes and rare gems, Christmas comes early for Hendrix fans

Jimi Hendrix ★★★★★½

West Coast Seattle Boy - The Jimi Hendrix Anthology

Experience Hendrix/Legacy



For Jimi Hendrix fanatics, the selling point of this four-disc set is a full CD of songs on which the guitarist doesn't sing lead and barely solos. Instead, he plays sideman to Little Richard, Don Covay and others on 15 R&B smokers. The tracks offer glimpses of a prodigy straining at the bit: The hot-shit solo on the Isley Brothers' 1964 "Testify," all of 10 seconds long, is like an early Marlon Brando screen test, coiled drama springing to life; the reverb-soaked, Curtis Mayfield-style licks on the Icemen's sublime 1966 "(My Girl) She's a Fox" offer a taste of the exploded-soul magic Hendrix cooked up later on "Castles Made of Sand."

The remaining three CDs parse Hendrix's subsequent career chronologically but strictly through alternate takes, demos and live tracks, drawn from the seemingly bottomless vault of recordings that shadow the three studio LPs and one live set released during his lifetime. The material splits the difference between sheer greatness (a gorgeously psychedelic instrumental take of "Are You Experienced?") and novelties like a ragged but deep cover of the Bob Dylan/Band classic "Tears of Rage," the highlight of six intimate tracks recorded in a hotel room in 1968 with singer/harmonica player Paul Caruso. There's also a wonderful, illuminating new DVD documentary narrated in Hendrix's own words - drawn from letters and interviews - by kindred spirit Bootsy Collins (the bit about eating a picnic lunch while watching race riots in Nashville, where Hendrix got his career started, is grimly hilarious). To be sure, this box is for the fans. But even when the tracks don't shed new light, they still burn as bright as the sun.

WILL HERMES

Paul's Hard-Rocking Solo Peak

Just when it seemed he'd lost his touch, McCartney delivered this 1973 classic

Paul McCartney and Wings ★★★★★

Band on the Run [Deluxe Edition]

Hear Music/Concord



The title track to *Band on the Run* is Paul McCartney's most gangsta moment. Who else could hit Number One with a prison-break epic starring the Jailer Man and Sailor Sam? This remastered three-CD/one-DVD version of McCartney's best-loved post-Beatles album adds extras like a 120-page book and footage of McCartney recording in Nigeria. But the real action still lies in the original LP's revved-up pleasures: After the sketchy experimentation of his early solo career, which produced highs ("Hi Hi Hi") and low-low-lows ("My Love"), McCartney returned to rocking like he'd never left. "Let Me Roll It" and "Helen Wheels" are his shaggiest guitar grooves. "Jet" is a gloriously daft Bowie



McCartney in 1973

takeoff - and Bowie seems to have returned the compliment by turning the spacey New Orleans pastiche "Nineteen Hundred and Eighty Five" into "TVC15." After *Band on the Run*, nobody ever again claimed Macca couldn't rock.

ROB SHEFFIELD

Tom Zé ★★★★★

Studies of Tom Zé: Explaining Things So I Can Confuse You

Luaka Bop

Vinyl-only retrospective of Brazil's avant-pop ambassador



In the Nineties, David Byrne helped Tom Zé get acknowledged as the most subversive dude in Brazil's rock-influenced Tropicália movement. This set proves he's still a force. Centered on Zé's "studies" of regional-pop forms, it includes the Byrne-curated 1990 *Best Of* compilation and the beautifully bizarre 2006 feminist operetta *Estudando o Pagode*. Zé's newer stuff deconstructs bossa nova, adding lascivious growls into a shopworn genre. Byrne even stops by to contribute a verse about chickenpox. It's easy-listening music made thrillingly uneasy.

W.H.

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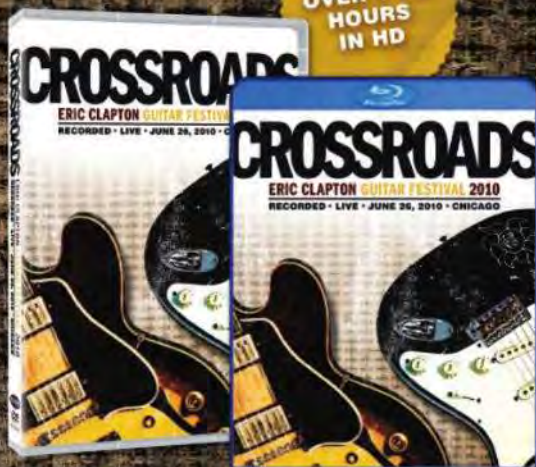
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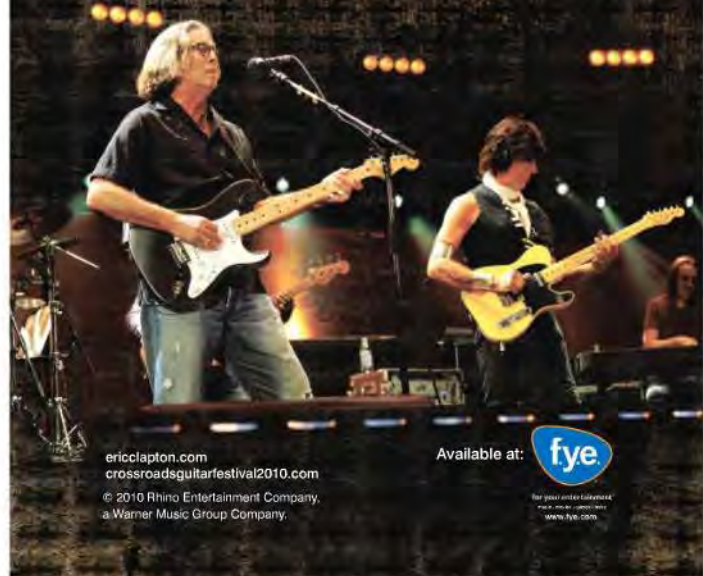
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REVIEWS MUSIC

My Chemical Romance Toughen Up

Leaving theatrical gloom behind, the Jersey boys make a blazing synth-rock album

My Chemical Romance ★★½

Danger Days: The True Lives of the Fabulous Killjoys
Reprise



My Chemical Romance used to be so sad, they could make your cold goth heart bleed. On 2006's *The Black Parade*, Gerard Way wailed about cancer and misery, emerging as a savior for the broken and the damned. Now, he's dyed his hair fiery red, and he's pissed at everyone: junkies, party girls, Hollywood and most of all himself, for getting so damn famous. "When you want to be a movie star/Play the game and take the band real far/Play it right and drive a Volvo car/Pick a fight at an airport bar," Way scoffs on the dirty-garage scorcher "Vampire Money."

That bad attitude suits this synth-laced album, which plays like a love letter to all the juvie-hall grads and Ritalin rats still waiting for someone to build a bomb big enough to blow all the pop bands off the airwaves. Somewhere between the metal-messiah riffs of "Destroya" and the Red Bull-fueled stomp of "Bulletproof Heart," *Danger Days* offers a total rejection of bloated celebrity rock. Intercut with fake radio-DJ skits (supposedly transmissions from a post-apocalyptic radio station) and powered by spite for rock-star clichés, MCR trade their signature Broadway-musical theatricality for simple loud-fast defiance. "Sing it out for the ones that'll hate your guts!" Way declares. But it's gonna be hard to get people to hate songs like "Na Na Na (Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na)," an anthem that taunts (nyah, nyah!) you even as it gets you to sing along. **MELISSA MAERZ**

Key Tracks:

"Vampire Money," "Bulletproof Heart"

My Chemical Romance with Way (right)



NEIL KRUG

BOOKS



Decoded ★★

Jay-Z Spiegel and Grau
Decoded began life nearly a decade ago as a would-be memoir that promised to trade the poetic liberties of Jay-Z's raps for a bona fide warts-and-all autobiography. But this is Mr. Dirt

Off Your Shoulder: The guy doesn't really do warts. Jay-Z seems to have grown uncomfortable with whatever the book was churning up and dialed back the candor. What he – and the world – ended up with was a mix of guarded reminiscences and annotated lyrics.

The cautious approach doesn't make for the sexiest sell – "Jay-Z's life story, now 85 percent less revealing!" Decoded is frustrating if you want a lively account of the man's life away from the microphone. Biography is scant (we don't even find out he has a brother until 140 pages in), as is any kind of dish: There are roughly as many words in this sentence as are devoted to Beyoncé in the whole book. While tales of corner-boy intrigue are alluded to – like Jay's stint selling crack in Trenton, New Jersey – they're never satisfyingly told. When he recalls his dad (who left the family when Jay was 11) taking him as a kid to Times Square for french fries and people-watching, the page lights up. More moments like that would have helped.

Instead, we get platitudes ("Sports are one of the great metaphors for life") and commentary



GUARDED
MC Jay-Z

on the words to 36 of his songs. Sometimes redundant, sometimes thrilling, the lyrical analysis demonstrates Jay-Z's rigor and emphasizes his view of hip-hop as a tool for social commentary, not just party music: He takes pleasure in the way he compared Osama bin Laden to Ronald Reagan (they both "got Manhattan to blow," with planes and crack, respectively) in "Beware." Throughout Decoded, his responsibility to hip-hop's elders and black America at large weighs heavily on him. You get the sense – never fully realized – the self-proclaimed God MC is worried, somewhere deep down, about being a sellout. Now that would be a revelation.

JONAH WEINER

Ne-Yo ★★★★★

Libra Scale *Island Def Jam*

Hitmaking singer conjures Michael with lush, epic R&B



Ne-Yo's latest is a concept album about crime-fighting "R&B superheroes,"

complete with a *femme fatale* and a thing called the Libra Scale – a device that measures the weights of money, power, fame and love. If you find that hard to follow, no matter: Just listen to the music. Ne-Yo has crafted an epic full of party songs, beatific ballads and throbbing spy-movie club music. It's lavish disco; the songs are cinematic in scope but have the unshakable hooks of great pop. If that formula sounds like a certain recently deceased R&B superhero – well, that's no coincidence. The real "concept" here is: Michael Jackson tribute album. And a damn good one.

JODY ROSEN

Key Tracks: "Champagne Life," "Know Your Name"

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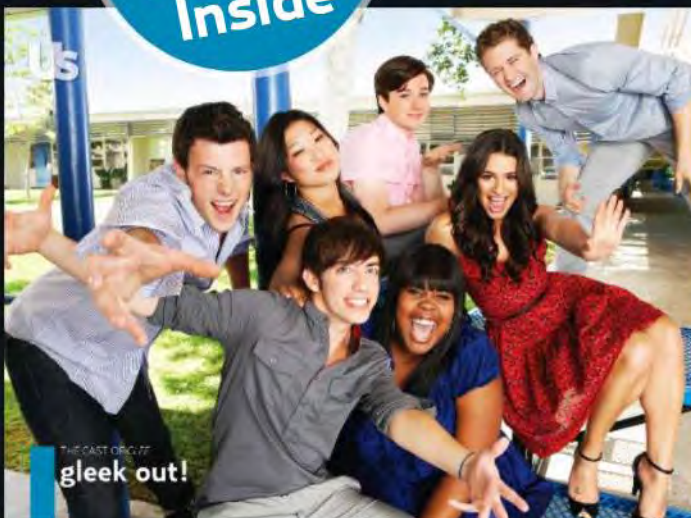
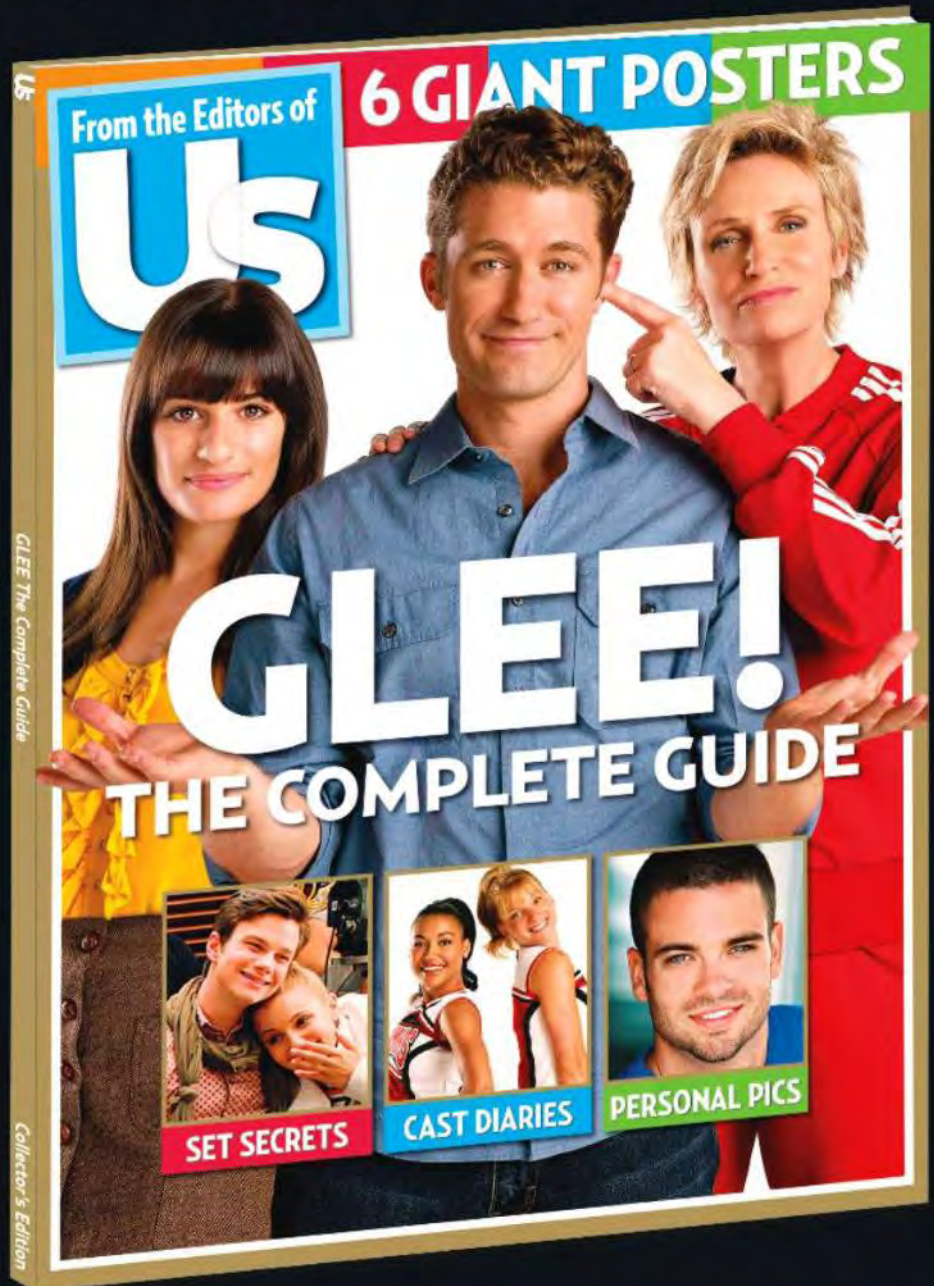
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M.K.

Rod Stewart

★★★½

Fly Me to the Moon... The Great American Songbook Volume V.J

More tasteful orchestral pop - this time with "Moon River"



For the past eight years, Rod Stewart has devoted his inimitable rasp to classic-pop covers albums that are occasionally brilliant (see his subtly gorgeous take on Cole Porter's "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," from 2002) and too often schlocky. The fifth installment is even less risky than its predecessors, tackling well-worn songs like "Moon River" and "Fly Me to the Moon." Stewart sounds great for 65, but his performances and the string-laden arrangements are way too faithful to the originals. It's unlikely he'll ever make another rock classic like *Gasoline Alley* or *Every Picture Tells a Story*. But hopefully he'll at least give it a shot.

ANDY GREENE

Key Tracks: "I've Got You Under My Skin," "September in the Rain"

N.E.R.D. ★★★

Nothing *Star Trak/Interscope*

Pharrell tie-dyes his fur coat for a psych-rap fantasia



Pharrell says N.E.R.D.'s fourth album was influenced by Doors records and James Bond movies. It's true: Nothing channels the band's sex rap through his own special vision of "the Sixties," with Pharrell firing off Morrison-esque "come on's!" on the lounge-y acid rocker "Help Me" and pitching pervy lyrics atop Sly Stone synth burble on "Hypnotize U." The best bits find a middle ground between *Hair* and hip-hop: On "Hot-n-Fun," Nelly Furtado chirps Aquarian benedictions over a Daisy Age-era De La Soul bass line. Bizarre political sermonizing (the environmental parable "Life as a Fish") adds unintended levity, but that's part of this goofily utopian disc's charm. JON DOLAN

Key Tracks: "Help Me," "Hypnotize U," "Hot-n-Fun"

Matt and Kim

★★★★½

Sidewalks *Fader*

Brooklyn boy-girl combo keep on the bright side



This Brooklyn duo are one of the perkier bands in indie rock, routinely whipping crowds into a crazy-dancing frenzy with their cheerfully spry keyboard-and-drums tunes. On their third album, simplicity is key: Most songs are built around simple synth riffs, battered by booming percussion and topped by Matt Johnson's adenoidal voice. But Matt and Kim still cover a lot of ground, feinting at techno on the jittery "Block After Block," creating a sweeping orchestral sound on "Northeast." The album's best asset might be its pervasive optimism. "I hear that shoestrings tend to break/But they tie back together great," Johnson sings on "Where You're Coming From." Call it therapy you can spaz out to.

J. EDWARD KEYES

Key Tracks: "Block After Block," "Where You're Coming From"

The Green Children ★★★

Encounter *Spinside*

Searching dance-pop ballads from elfin dreamers



The debut from Norwegian singer Milla Sunde and English producer Marlow Bevan kicks off with the mist-shrouded sounds of an enchanted forest - the perfect scene-setter for an album full of what they call "cinematic fantasy pop." Most of *Encounter* glides by like Lady Gaga on a unicorn: Sunde gives synth-diva histrionics a mystical spritz, singing about dragons and black magic over skittering electro beats. The Green Children are about as subtle as 12-year-olds, though there's something sweet about their naive emotionalism: See "Tell Me," where a drowning-witch metaphor is deployed to movingly lament a mother's depression.

J.D.

Key Tracks: "Tell Me," "Dragons," "Black Magic"

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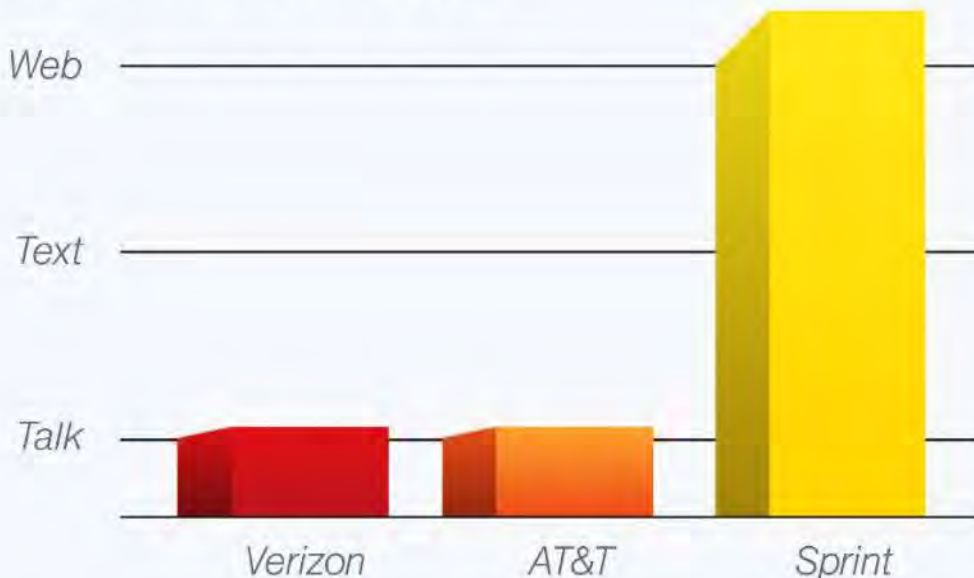
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TAKE A BOW
King (Colin Firth), queen
(Helena Bonham Carter),
teacher (Geoffrey Rush).

MOVIES
BY PETER TRAVERS

Oscar's New Royalty

The riveting true tale of a stammering king heats up the race for the Academy Awards

The King's Speech ★★½

Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush, Helena Bonham Carter

Directed by Tom Hooper

IT COULD HAVE BEEN A bunch of pip-pip, stiff-upper-lip Brit blather about a stuttering king who learns to stop worrying and love the microphone. Instead, *The King's Speech* – a crowning achievement powered by a dream cast – digs vibrant human drama out of the dry dust of history. King George VI (Colin Firth) – father of the present Queen Elizabeth – found his own Dr. Strangelove in Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), a wildly eccentric Australian speech therapist who made it possible for the stammering monarch to go on radio in 1939 and rally his subjects to support the declaration of war on Hitler's Germany.

The King's Speech plays out on the battlefield of words, not action. Writer Donald Seidler (doing keenly insightful work partly owing to his own bouts with a stammer) had conceived

the story first as a play. Before you can think the words "static" and "confining," be advised that director Tom Hooper, garlanded with Emmy dust for *John Adams*, *Elizabeth I*, *Longford* and *Prime Suspect*, breathes fresh, urgent life into every frame of this powerhouse. Hooper, 37, is a prodigious talent. The emotion this film produces is staggering.

Hooper begins in 1925, as the king, then merely Prince Albert, is trying to speak at the British Empire Exhibition. The words stick in his throat, and his silences between syllables fill the stadium. The prince's embarrassment is acute, and deeply felt by his compassionate wife, Elizabeth (a superb Helena Bonham Carter creates miracles with every subtle look and gesture), who goads him to visit Logue. His Highness goes into heavy snob mode in the presence of this commoner, who demands that they use first names. When Lionel first calls Albert "Bertie," Firth's poleaxed reaction is priceless. Lionel treats speech lessons

like therapy sessions, pushing for details about life in the royal family. What he gets is a portrait of a blowhard father, George V (Michael Gambon), and a taunting brother, Edward VIII (a wonderfully snide Guy Pearce), who reduces the proud, vulnerable Albert to rubble by committing the one unforgivable sin: Edward abdicates the throne to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson (Eve Best), leaving Bertie to succeed him. Suddenly, the man who would not be king most assuredly is.

Firth's nuanced brilliance is a thing of bruised beauty. Oscar-nominated last year for *A Single Man*, he gives a towering performance that deserves a shower of awards. And Rush is his match in the hilarious and heartfelt interactions between king and commoner. Lionel is a failed actor given to grand gestures, and Rush chows down on this feast of a role, jolting the movie to life. Firth plays the counterpoint, the blue blood bred to hold it all together. It's uproarious to

watch Lionel prod Bertie to lose his cool, forcing him to sing out a symphony of fuck-shit-goddamns. Luckily, this release takes place in Lionel's home, where his wife and children are unaware of the royal patient. The scene in which Lionel's wife, Myrtle (Jennifer Ehle), meets the king has a special poignancy, if you remember Ehle and Firth as lovers in TV's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The King's Speech doesn't have the budget to show coronations and pomp, but it misses nothing in resonant intimacy. Hooper, with a Brit father and Aussie mother, throws himself into the scene in which Lionel stands like a conductor in front of the king as he delivers the speech of his life. Two men alone create an epic landscape of feeling in one of the very best movies of the year.

THE TRAVERS TAKE

Travers' guide to the best and worst movies out this holiday season: rollingstone.com/travers.

Morning Glory

★★★★

Harrison Ford, Diane Keaton, Rachel McAdams

Directed by Roger Michell

IMAGINE A NETWORK NEWS anchor getting pushed off his perch and forced to co-host a morning show featuring idiotic banter and – yikes! – cooking segments. That'll give you a taste of *Morning Glory*, a tart, terrific comedy that gives Harrison Ford his best and funniest role in years. The iconic Han Solo and Indiana Jones shows real comic chops as Mike Pomeroy, the news diva who resents slumming in the fields of TV fluff.

Diane Keaton as Colleen Peck, his co-host on *Daybreak*, hates sharing her desk with this crab-ass. "Pompous – that's a new look for you," she deadpans just before they go on. Ford and Keaton are delicious together. But *Morning Glory*, winningly directed by Roger Michell (*Notting Hill*) from a savvy script by Aline Brosh McKenna (*The Devil Wears Prada*), loses momentum on a dutiful romance between Becky Fuller (a lively Rachel McAdams), the workaholic producer of *Daybreak*, and Adam Bennett (Patrick Wilson), a cute news guy. It's the backstage fireworks that sparkle. For ratings, Colleen will submit to an on-camera Pap smear. Mike drowns his disdain with cronies, played by Bob Schieffer, Chris Matthews and Morley Safer. Unlike *Broadcast News* and its daddy, *Network*, *Morning Glory* doesn't go for the jugular by attacking TV entertainment for reducing all of life to the common rubble of banality. You can see that in Ford's eyes as he delivers the film's most memorable laughs, the kind that stick in your throat.

The Next Three Days

★★★★½

Russell Crowe

Directed by Paul Haggis

IT'S DAMN HARD TO ENJOY A thriller when you don't, won't, can't believe a word of it. Russell Crowe stars as a mild-mannered teacher (huh?) whose



HEAD GAMES

Ferrell (*Megamind*), Hawkins (*Made in Dagenham*), Keaton and Ford (*Morning Glory*), Crowe (*The Next Three Days*).



wife (Elizabeth Banks) is suicidal about doing a life sentence for killing her boss. So he decides to break her out of prison. For ideas, he watches YouTube. Handy. Writer-director Paul Haggis (*Crash*) has the actors, including Ty Simpkins as the couple's nine-year-old son, race preposterously all over Pittsburgh with the cops in hot pursuit. In case you want to try this at home, wearing different-colored law off your trail. Say what? Credulity isn't just strained, it practically crawls into your lap and cries for mercy.

Megamind

★★★★½

Will Ferrell, Brad Pitt

Directed by Tom McGrath

WHAT THIS RAUCOUS 3D ANIMATED fun house lacks in originality (think bastard child of *The Incredibles* and *Despicable Me*) it makes up for in visual and vocal wit. Will Ferrell has a ball being a dick with sharp diction as Megamind, a blue-skinned visitor from another planet who comes to Earth as a force for evil. Metro Man, voiced by Brad Pitt, is his heroic counterpart. But our sympathies are with Megamind and his assistant, Minion (scene-stealer David Cross), a robot

with a fish bowl for a head. You actually root for Megamind to get the girl TV reporter (Tina Fey) and go whup-ass on her stalker cameraman (Jonah Hill) when he gets ill-gained superpowers. Director Tom McGrath keeps the action spinning and trips lightly over the bumper spectacle of watching a bad boy go good.

Made in Dagenham

★★★★

Sally Hawkins

Directed by Nigel Cole

SALLY HAWKINS IS JUST PLAIN irresistible in this funny, touching and vital salute to women in the work force. Calling *Made in Dagenham* the British *Norma Rae* gets at the core but not the warm, beating heart of this fact-based tale of a 1968 strike of female employees for pay parity with men at the Ford Motor plant in Dagenham, England. Working with a script by William Ivory, director Nigel Cole (*Calendar Girls*) creates a vivid sense of time and place even when the plot runs out of surprises. Hawkins (*Happy-Go-Lucky*) plays Rita O'Grady, the wife and mother who becomes the unlikely voice for the women car upholsterers in her sweatshop

who resent being classified and paid as "unskilled" labor. Rita's union rep (Bob Hoskins) prods her to take on the top brass, and Hawkins reveals the warrior inside. Though the strike puts her at odds with her husband (the excellent Daniel Mays), Rita's fight against the sexist attitudes of the era bonds her closer to her own sex, including Lisa Hopkins (a stellar Rosamund Pike), the Cambridge-educated wife of one of the male pigs. Ultimately, Rita and her newborn firebrands are granted a meeting with government minister Barbara Castle (Miranda Richardson), and progress ensues. Richardson is sensational and then some in a movie you can't help cheering.

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PHIL COLLINS

[Cont. from 59] should shut the fuck up and calm the fuck down"); and probably will never play the drums in public again.

Due to that neck injury, his hands can no longer hold the sticks. Worse, to him, he can't help his youngest kids build toys. He can't write his name with a pen. He has trouble wiping himself. It sounds terrible, and it is, but since it only affects his ability to grip objects, you'd never know it to look at him. There's nothing frail about him, and a recent surgery may even improve his condition. But as for drumming, he says, "I was going to stop anyway. I had stopped. I don't miss it."

Some of his inner circle, however, aren't so sure about that. "Oh, yeah, of course he misses it," one of them recently said, "but it really wouldn't be like Phil to let on."

COLLINS REALLY IS MR. Nice Guy, and his recollections of his younger years as a rock star reflect that. He was never a big drinker, never a big dope smoker, has never taken LSD. The closest he came to destroying a hotel room was with his jazz-fusion side band Brand X, when some of the guys Super-Glued the phone handset to the receiver. "I didn't do it, but I felt terrible about it. The maid was going to get blamed. I always felt sorry for the maids." OK, but has he ever slept with a groupie? "No." Ever had a three-way? "Nope, I was never offered that piece of cake," he says. "It is an ambition of mine, though. I've got a few ambitions left, and that might be one of them." He smiles. "I wouldn't mind."

But there does seem to be some serious darkness in him as well. He has spent time imagining battle scenes at the Alamo. "At one point, the Mexicans were killing each other. It was dark, and you killed anything that moved. And then when they attacked the last line of defense, it was hand-to-hand fighting and they went around decapitating all the bodies and making sure they were dead. 'What must that have been like?' I think.

And you have things like that coming over your head all the time." He bites his nails. "I'm fascinated by what people will do to each other," he goes on. "Actually, I'm sort of interested in the gory details of life."

The next day at the rehearsal hall, Collins is taking a break and sawing into another gherkin and saying, "When I say, 'I'm going to write myself out of the script,' I'm serious. When I say I'm stopping and I don't care about all this, I'm serious. I mean, I will write songs, and I will have fun making demos, but I may well not make another record. My deal with Atlantic is over with this Motown record. It's sobering and quite liberating. Anyway, I've had enough of being me. Not to the point—"

He pauses, and then he goes on, "I have had suicidal thoughts. I wouldn't blow my head off. I'd overdose or do something that didn't hurt. But I wouldn't do that to the children. A comedian who committed suicide in the Sixties left a note saying, 'Too many things went wrong too often.' I often think about that."

His manner when he says these things is straightforward. He betrays no emotion. The second-biggest pop star of the Eighties (after Michael Jackson) just sits there, seeming like he maybe wished he could blink it all away.

"Everything has added up to a load that I'm getting tired of carrying," he continues. "It's gotten so complicated. It's the three failed marriages, and having kids that grew up without me, and it's the personal criticism, of being Mr. Nice Guy, or of divorcing my wife by fax, all that stuff, the journalism, some of which I find insulting. I wouldn't say that I have suicidal tendencies over my career or bad press. They're just another chink in the wall. It's cumulative. You can say, 'Grow up, man, everybody gets criticism.' I know that. And I've philosophically adjusted to it. But does that make it any more pleasurable? No." And that's the trouble with wishing you were somebody else. As much as you may want it, you know it'll never happen, at least not in this lifetime.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Special guest performance by Weezer; Mad Men's Vincent Kartheiser steps out of his blue suit for a hot night in Vegas; Bam Margera chats with other Hot Party guests; The crowd at JET nightclub gets loose.



Rock Star Weekend

On October 1st - 3rd, *Rolling Stone* hosted the first-ever Rock Star Weekend at the **Mirage** in Las Vegas. The event weekend kicked off with a high-energy performance from **Weezer** at The Mirage's BARE Pool followed by the *Rolling Stone* Hot Party at **JET** nightclub. **Swedish House Mafia** electrified the JET crowd with a beat-infused performance that featured tracks from their new album, *Until One*. Saturday afternoon included the *RS* Recovery Party hosted by **KCRW Musical Director Jason Bentley** who offered the perfect set to cool down from the Vegas heat. The crowd in town for the multi-event weekend were also treated to signature cocktails from presenting sponsor **Absolut**, sampling of **Vitamin Water** and **Pringles Extreme** and special giveaways from **Canon** and **Sprint**.

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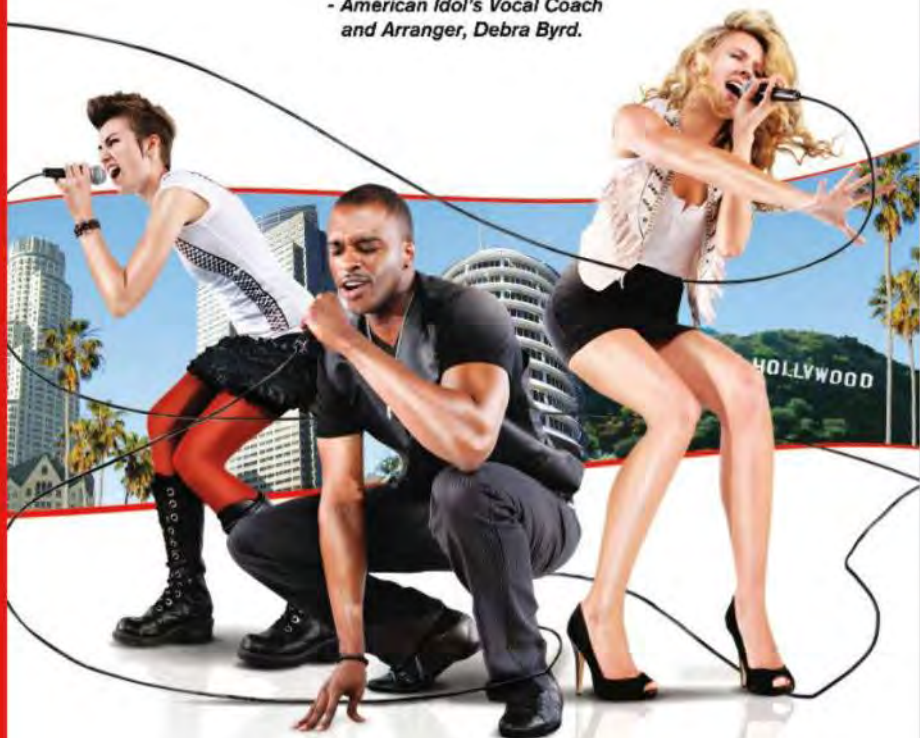


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CHARTS

iTUNES TOP 10 SONGS

- 1 Ke\$ha**
"We R Who We R" - Kemosabe/RCA
- 2 Far East Movement**
"Like a G6" - Cherrytree/Interscope
- 3 Willow Smith**
"Whip My Hair" - Roc-A-Fella/Columbia
- 4 Rihanna**
"Only Girl (In the World)" - Def Jam
- 5 Nelly**
"Just a Dream" - Universal Motown
- 6 Taylor Swift**
"Sparks Fly" - Big Machine
- 7 Trey Songz**
"Bottoms Up" - Songbook/Atlantic
- 8 Bruno Mars**
"Just the Way You Are" - Elektra
- 9 Pink**
"Raise Your Glass" - LaFace
- 10 Kanye West**
"Monster" - Roc-A-Fella

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COLLEGE RADIO TOP 10 ALBUMS

- 1 Sufjan Stevens**
The Age of Adz - Asthmatic Kitty
- 2 Deerhunter**
Halcyon Digest - 4AD
- 3 Belle and Sebastian**
Write About Love - Matador
- 4 Of Montreal**
False Priest - Polyvinyl
- 5 No Age**
Everything in Between - Sub Pop
- 6 Arcade Fire**
The Suburbs - Merge
- 7 Pomegranates**
One of Us - Afternoon
- 8 Ben Folds/Nick Hornby**
Lonely Avenue - Nonesuch
- 9 The Black Angels**
Phosphene Dream - Blue Horizon
- 10 Marnie Stern**
Marnie Stern - Kill Rock Stars



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From the Vault

RS 987, November 17th, 2005

TOP 10 SINGLES

- 1 Kanye West**
"Gold Digger" - Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam
- 2 Chris Brown**
"Run It!" - Jive/Zomba
- 3 Black Eyed Peas**
"My Humps" - Interscope
- 4 Young Jeezy**
"Soul Survivor" - Corporate Thugz/Def Jam
- 5 Nickelback**
"Photograph" - Roadrunner
- 6 Sean Paul**
"We Be Burnin'" - VP/Atlantic
- 7 Bow Wow**
"Like You" - Columbia
- 8 Kelly Clarkson**
"Because of You" - RCA
- 9 Mariah Carey**
"Shake It Off" - Island
- 10 Fall Out Boy**
"Sugar, We're Goin' Down" - Fueled by Ramen/Island



On the Cover

"My job description is that I'm a rock star. And I'm good at it, you know? I geek out on Beatles, Dylan and Clash records. I want some kids to be geeking out to my records, going, 'You can really see in Warning where they start to make the change into American Idiot.'"

—Billie Joe Armstrong

Top 40 Albums

- 1 NEW Taylor Swift**
Speak Now - Big Machine
- 2 1 Sugarland**
The Incredible Machine - Mercury Nashville
- 3 2 Kings of Leon**
Come Around Sundown - RCA
- 4 5 Lil Wayne**
I Am Not a Human Being - Cash Money/Universal Motown
- 5 8 Eminem**
Recovery - Aftermath/Interscope
- 6 3 Elton John and Leon Russell**
The Union - Rocket/Mercury
- 7 6 Glee: The Music**
The Rocky Horror Glee Show (EP) - 20th Century Fox TV/Columbia
- 8 4 Rod Stewart**
Fly Me to the Moon... The Great American Songbook Volume V - J
- 9 10 Darius Rucker**
Charleston, SC 1966 - Capital Nashville
- 10 NEW Michael Bublé**
Hollywood: The Deluxe (EP) - 143/Reprise
- 11 15 The Band Perry**
The Band Perry - Republic Nashville
- 12 13 Kenny Chesney**
Hemingway's Whiskey - BNA
- 13 14 Zac Brown Band**
You Get What You Give - Southern Ground/Rear/Big Picture/Atlantic
- 14 16 Big Time Rush**
BTR (Soundtrack) - Nickelodeon/Columbia
- 15 17 Trey Songz**
Passion, Pain & Pleasure - Songbook/Atlantic
- 16 7 Shakira**
Sale El Sol - Epic
- 17 11 Hannah Montana Forever**
Soundtrack - Walt Disney
- 18 22 Katy Perry**
Teenage Dream - Capital
- 19 20 Mumford and Sons**
Sigh No More - Glassnote
- 20 23 Justin Bieber**
My World 2.0 - RBMG/Island
- 21 18 Selena Gomez and the Scene**
A Year Without Rain - Hollywood
- 22 21 Toby Keith**
Bullets in the Gun - Show Dog-Universal
- 23 9 Third Day**
Move - Essential
- 24 19 Linkin Park**
A Thousand Suns - Machine Shop
- 25 28 Lady Antebellum**
Need You Now - Capitol Nashville
- 26 25 NOW 35**
Various Artists - Universal/EMI/Sony Music
- 27 115↑ Michael Bublé**
Crazy Love - 143/Reprise
- 28 25 WOW Hits 2011**
Various Artists - Provident-Integrity/Word-Curb/EMI
- 29 - Taylor Swift**
Sounds of the Season: The Taylor Swift Holiday Collection (EP) - NBC
- 30 24 Bruno Mars**
Doo-Wops & Hooligans - Elektra
- 31 30 Maroon 5**
Hands All Over - A&M/Octone
- 32 NEW Senses Fail**
Fire - Vagrant
- 33 31 Santana**
Guitar Heaven: The Greatest Guitar Classics of All Time - Arista
- 34 49 Miranda Lambert**
Revolution - Columbia (Nashville)
- 35 34 Waka Flocka Flame**
Flockavelli - 1017 Brick Squad/Asylum
- 36 47 Rick Ross**
Teflon Don - Maybach/Slip-N-Slide/Def Jam
- 37 35 Jamey Johnson**
The Guitar Song - Mercury Nashville
- 38 65 Taylor Swift**
Fearless - Big Machine
- 39 42 Billy Currington**
Enjoy Yourself - Mercury Nashville
- 40 12 Bob Dylan**
The Bootleg Series Vol. 9: The Witmark Demos: 1962-1964 - Columbia/Legacy



Taylor's Triumph

She did it! Swift's third album debuted with 1,047,000 copies - more than the rest of the Top 40 combined - for the biggest first week since 2005.



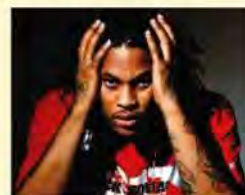
Bad Mother Rucker

Sixteen years since the Blowfish blew up, Rucker's second country disc has sold 164,000 copies, thanks to the breakup hit "Come Back Song."



He's Irresistible

Bublé's new EP - a mix of new material and live tunes, including Eagles and Drifters covers - sold 25,771 copies its first week out.



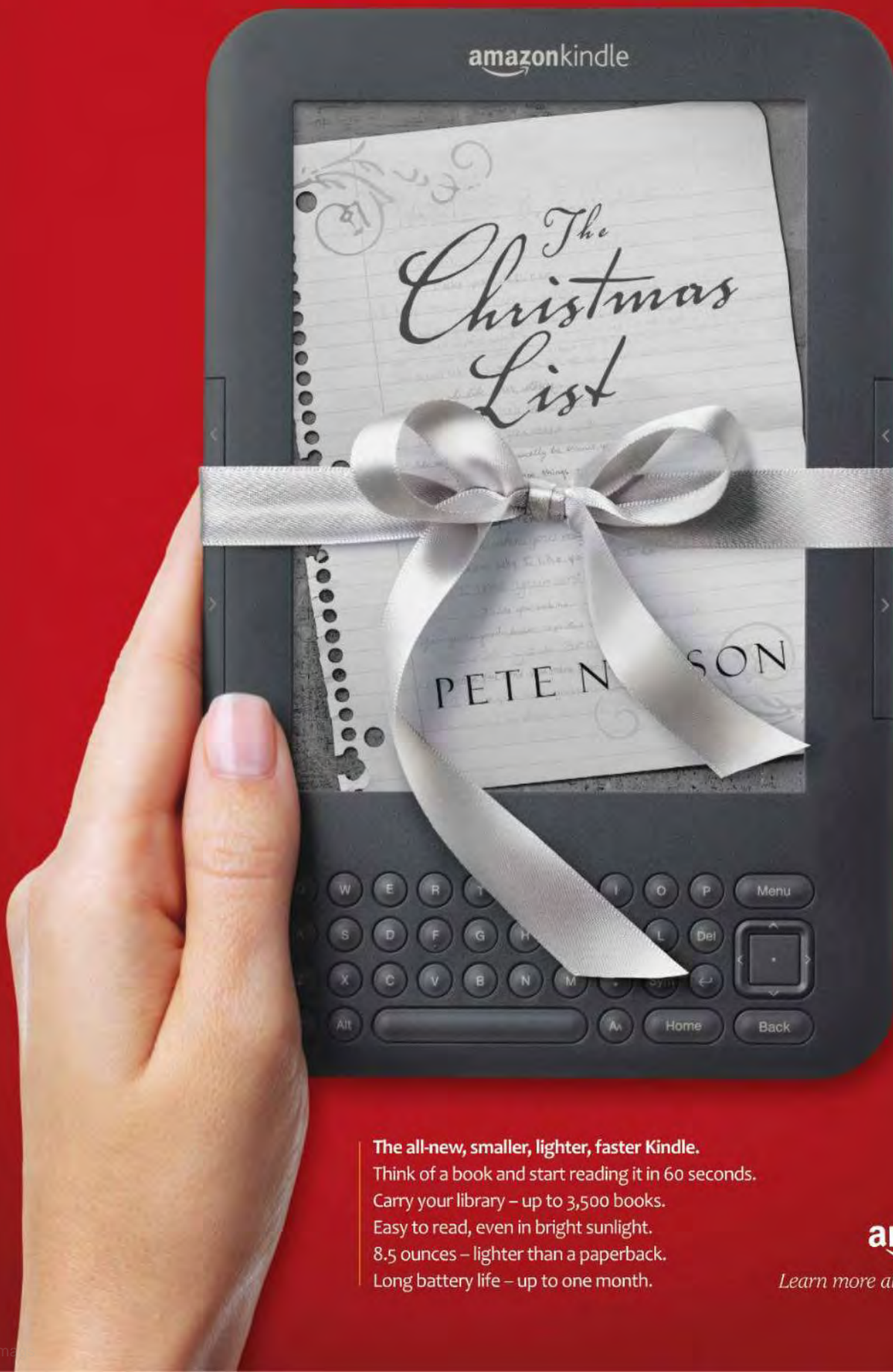
Waka Goes Hard

MC Waka Flocka Flame caught buzz for a parody, "Baracka Flocka Flame," featuring a fake Obama smoking and performing his hit "Hard in Da Paint."

OO chart position on Nov. 3rd, 2010
OO chart position on Oct. 27th, 2010
NEW New Entry
2ND Re-Entry
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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: JOSEPH ANTHONY BAKER; JIM WRIGHT; BEN WATTS; DONNA PERMELL; DAVID TORCHE; PATRICK FRASER

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